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Anime & Manga Monthly

ANIMERICA

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Anime Feature
**SILENT
MÖBIUS**

Exclusive! The ANIMERICA Interview
**THE TWISTS AND
TURNS OF
KIA ASAMIYA**

Manga Features
MERMAID FOREST by Rumiko Takahashi
AD POLICE by Tony Takezaki



They Should Have Had Their Whole Lives Ahead of Them...

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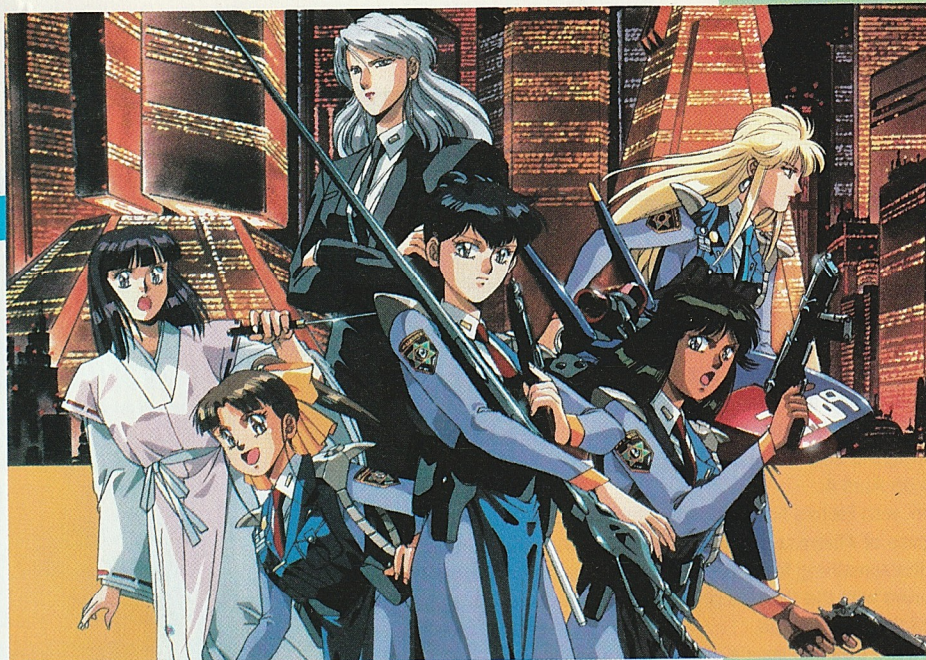
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FEATURE ARTICLE

Silent Möbius

Beginning without fanfare in May 1988, Kia Asamiya's *Silent Möbius* has gone on to become one of the most talked-about multimedia phenomena of the '90s. Toshifumi Yoshida explores the secrets of its success

The ANIMERICA Interview

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The creator of *Silent Möbius* talks about manga theory, the attitude of the Japanese toward domestic directors and why manga artists should stay out of the anime studio. By Takashi Oshiguchi4

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Fourth Chilling Installment in the Horror Masterpiece

MERMAID FOREST

Partake of the mermaid's flesh, the legend says, and you'll live forever. This month, the filthy mermaid hags of the village begin their desperate endgame while Yuta continues his reluctant

"chicken-on-a-stick" impression. One of the most unsettling installments we've ever read, brought to you by manga wunderkind Rumiko Takahashi and exclusive to ANIMERICA38

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FROM THE EDITOR

Anime Lah-Lah Land

In spring they say an otaku's fancy lightly turns to anime and manga conventions, and if the first convention I've attended this year is any indication, the 1993 season is looking very fanciful indeed.

Since they first began featuring Japanese animation as an integral part of their programming, the San Francisco Bay Area's annual "Wonder Con" has been thought by many to be the unofficial start of the West Coast anime and manga season. Although I wasn't able to attend Wonder Con this year, I was able to make it to L.A. Hero/U.S. Renditions' anime screening, held during the Los Angeles Science Fiction and Comic Convention at the Shrine Auditorium on April 4.

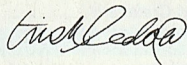
The screening began promptly at 11:00 a.m. with Hero's first dubbed episode of *Giant Robo*, "The Day the Earth Stood Still," followed by the first two episodes of *Macross II*, "Lovers Again." Dark Image Entertainment's subtitled *Raven Tengu Kabuto* came next, with the remaining four episodes of *Macross II* followed by dubbed episodes of Hero's *Guyver*. The program concluded with the dubbed premiere of *Ambassador Magma*, the new OAV series based on Osamu Tezuka's manga of the same name.

Convention coordinator Bruce Schwartz told me that this year's attendance was close to 2400, down from last year's all-time high of 2600. Considering that Creation Con (the West Coast's largest *Star Trek* convention) was also in town over the weekend, the numbers are still impressive. According to Bruce, "This year's attendance proves that Japanese animation can draw in a crowd as easily as *Trek* can."

The biggest draw of the convention was the anime premiere itself, filling all 500+ seats in the house and most of the aisles, second-floor balcony and floorspace as well. Several persons told me later that the dealers' room was virtually deserted during the screening. I was particularly glad to note how few fans left during the *Macross II* screening (the first time for all six episodes to be shown anywhere), although I wonder at the huge reaction received by Hibiki's line at the end of the last episode. When Hibiki and Silvie speculate on the things Ishtar will do now that she's returned to the Marduk, I didn't think Hibiki's "What we've got to do now is much more important" was meant as a double entendre. (I could be wrong.)

Yes, my fellow Animericans, the convention season is definitely upon us. If this one day in Los Angeles was able to cause such an uproar, imagine the reaction at Santa Clara's Anime America on June 25-27, or at Oakland's Anime Expo on July 2-4. Expo staffer Phillip Yee gave me a grim taste of things to come in a recent letter. "Go ahead and voice-act!" he says jocularly. "Just as long as you don't mind a few wise cracks at Anime Expo..."

Gee, I can hardly wait.



Trish Ledoux
Editor

Thanks to the unanimous "YES!" ballots I've received over the past few months, I'm pleased to announce that I will be continuing my voice-acting career. (Of course, whether I can land another role remains to be seen.) In the meantime, the contest continues as to which emulator I played in MACROSS II. Simply identify the unnamed character by writing down the single line I spoke as an emulator on a postcard and send it to me here at Viz. The first one to correctly identify me will receive a special prize, not to mention my eternal admiration.



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Masahiro Oga

Executive Editor
Seiji Horibuchi

Managing Editor
Satoru Fujii

Editor
Trish Ledoux

Associate Editors
Julie Davis
Takayuki Karahashi

Translation Editor
Toshifumi Yoshida

Art Director
Yoshiyuki Higuchi

Contributing Writers
Yoshitaka Ishigami
Chris Keller
Eugene Lee
Takashi Oshiguchi
Sakae Sakuma
Rick Sternbach
Matt Thorn
Jeff Yang

Research and Translation
Yoshiyuki Karahashi
Albert Sze-Wei Wang

AD Police
Story by Toshimichi Suzuki
Art by Tony Takezaki
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Lettering and Touch-Up by Wayne Truman

Mermaid Forest
Story and Art by Rumiko Takahashi
Translated by Matt Thorn
Lettering and Touch-Up by Wayne Truman

Contributors



Translation Editor
Toshifumi Yoshida has worked on more anime and manga projects than anyone else we know. Upcoming projects include *Outlanders* from D.I.E. and *Silent Möbius*, Part Four from Viz. Toshi's great interest in manga artist Kia Asamiya is one reason we asked him to tackle this month's Anime Feature; that he's the only one we know who can understand the two Möbius films is another.



"Dateline: Japan" reporter
Sakae Sakuma is something of an otaku legend. Editor-in-chief of *NEXT* manga magazine, consultant to the otaku-zine *COMIC DO-PE* and avid gamer (rumor has it he was "Slayn" in the role-playing game that inspired *Record of Lodoss War*), Sakae is a licensed nutritionist, holds an MA in political science, and spends his spare time helping out in his family's Italian restaurant "Trattoria Capriccio" in Yokohama.



Associate Editor
Julie Davis, when not exercising her role as aspiring artist and "photographer to the anime superstars," is struggling to pass final muster as one of the anime and manga community's precious few female Gundam specialists. (G'wan, ask her how much—Naah, nevermind.) Julie is also known for her association with *ANIMAG*, The Magazine of Japanese Animation, to which she is a longtime contributor and production staff member.



"Anime Q & A" reporter
Jeff Yang writes for THE VILLAGE VOICE and *MADMOISELLE* magazine and edits *A. MAGAZINE*, The Asian American Quarterly. As *ANIMERICA*'s eastern front correspondent, he reports from the trenches of anime fandom and industry, ducks incoming flames on the worldwide computer network Internet (especially "rec.arts.anime") and hopes to someday be assigned a peacetime post covering anime in the Bahamas. Send all dispatches to: jyang@panix.com.

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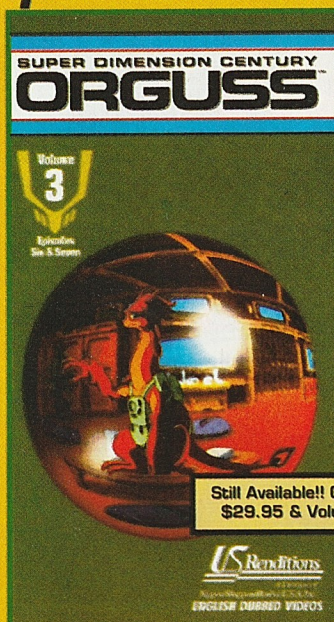
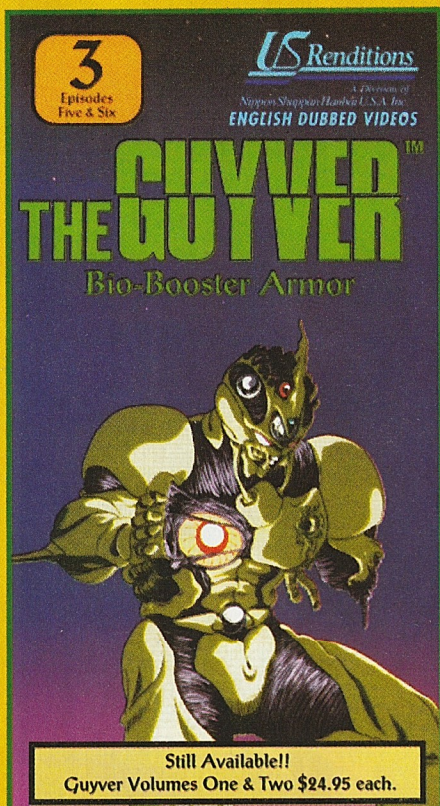
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In Episode Five, "The Death of the Guyver," Chronos Japan transforms Makishima into Enzyme, a powerful Zoanoid created to eliminate the Guyver. To force a confrontation with Shō, Commander Guu again kidnaps Mizuki and Tetsuro. They are taken to the mountains and forced to watch as Shō and Enzyme battle in a fight to the death!

In Episode Six, "Terminal Battle! The Fall of Chronos Japan," Tetsuro and Mizuki are held hostage at Chronos headquarters. Meanwhile, Guyver III's identity is revealed as he initiates his plan to destroy Chronos. Will Guyver regenerate in time to save Tetsuro and Mizuki?!

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Episode Six, "Vanishing Point," The Emaan are in desperate need of new supplies when Jabby discovers a secret vineyard. While gathering the new crop, Jabby recounts his origin to Kei. Suddenly, the Chiram attack and Jabby warns the Emaan about an eminent dimensional shift!

Episode Seven, "I Love You," Weary of endless Chiram aggression, the Emaan flee toward the Straits of Gibraltar and their homeland. Kei must contend with Slay's jealousy, Mimsy's uncertainty, Moma's advances, and an attack from the Chiram Navy! What's a guy supposed to do?!

Super Dimension Century, Orguss
VOLUME 4 Episodes Eight & Nine
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Episode Eight, "Runaway," The Chiram Navy continues to pursue the Glomar as it nears the port of Lyon. Meanwhile, Kei tries to tell Mimsy about his feelings, but must again face her indecision and Slay's bitterness. As usual, the Chiram disrupt the personal turmoil in another senseless attack!

Episode Nine, "Revolution," The Emaan continue their journey homeward, but stop in France in order to sell some goods. However, the oppressive French government is only interested in weaponry to keep the civilian population under control. Kei and Mimsy get embroiled in the French revolution and must help "Joan of Arc" capture the menacing Smash Cannon before it destroys the underground!

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SILENT MOBIUS

In the grim, distant future, the great megalopolis of Tokyo is overpopulated, heavily polluted and constantly bombarded with torrents of acid rain. The number of cases involving unexplained phenomena has increased exponentially since the turn of the century, and in 2023 a special task force is formed to combat the growing threat.

Against the terror and the madness stands the "Attacked Mystification Police" ("Abnormal Mystery Police" in Viz Comics' English version), an all-female six-member team blessed with sorcerous and technological abilities. Leading them is Rally Cheyenne, along with "visionaire" Lebia Maverick, cybernetic warrior Kiddy Phenil, high-priestess Nami Yamigumo, and the team's mascot-like youngest member Yuki Saiko. In their battle against the monster-like entities sent by their occult nemesis, the "Lucifer Hawks," the members of AMP are going to need every ability they've got.

The ANIMERICA Interview

The Twists and Turns of Kia Asamiya

The creator of *Silent Möbius* talks about manga theory, the attitude of the Japanese toward domestic directors and why manga artists should stay out of the animation studio. Interview by Takashi Oshiguchi, translated by Takayuki Karanashi

Silent Möbius is one of those manga that truly catches the eye. Many fans are first attracted to the series by the exquisitely rendered backgrounds, others by the sheer physical charisma of the AMP team. Without ever having read so much as a single issue, anime and manga fans on either side of the Pacific can readily identify artist Kia Asamiya's distinctive and unique style, even from across a crowded room.

"In a field dominated by artists who take their style from the two-dimensional world of anime cels directly to the manga page, Asamiya stands alone," says Managing Editor Satoru Fujii of Viz Comics, which will continue the bestselling *Silent Möbius, Part Four* English manga series this July. "Asamiya is a true trail-blazer in his innovative use of odd-sized panels, special effects and his painstakingly precise application of zipatone. His comics always have that little 'something extra' to them, which is one reason why I think he's become so amazingly popular in recent years."

Silent Möbius was first published in May, 1988 in the manga magazine *Comic Comp*. To date, the serialized manga has been compiled into five graphic novels, not to mention a plethora of other media such as CD image albums, computer games, novels, model kits and other accessories as well as two animated theatrical releases, one of which is making the rounds this summer in theaters all over the U.S. as an English-dubbed

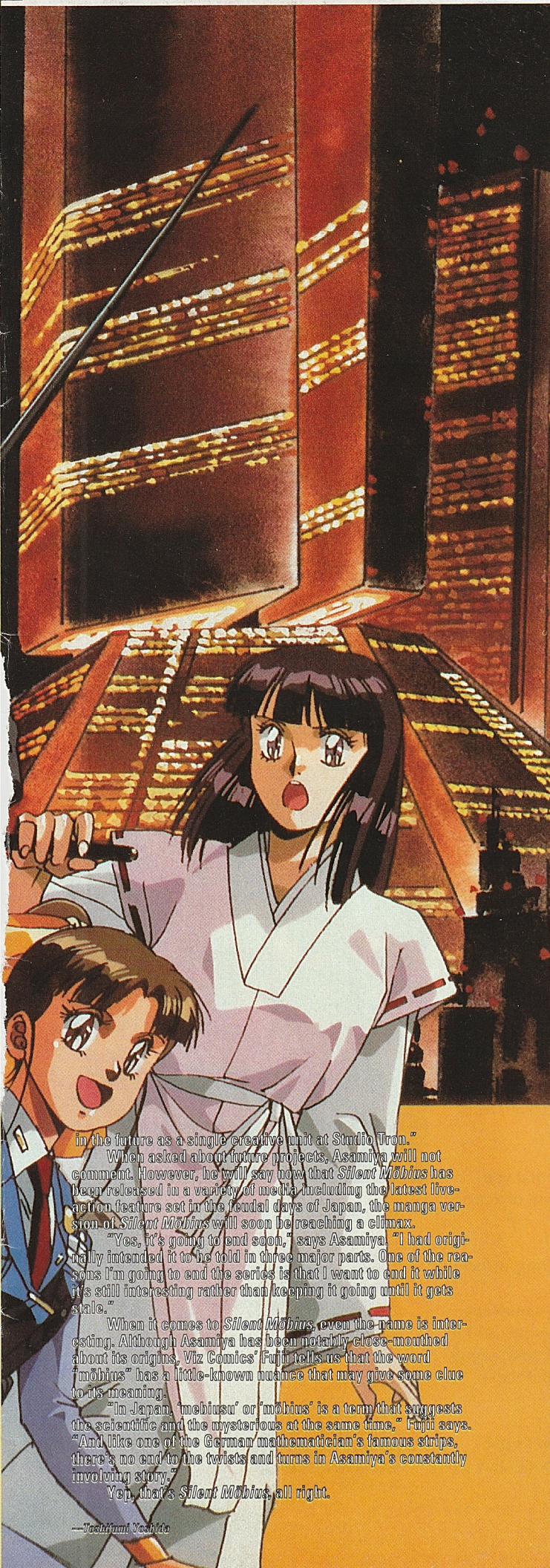
feature by Streamline Pictures.

Both *Silent Möbius* films are based on the storyline that began in the fifth volume of Asamiya's manga and feature the talents of general director, character designer and long-time collaborator Michitaka Kikuchi. Kikuchi is scheduled to make a personal appearance at next month's anime and manga exposition Anime Expo '93, to be held from July 2-4 at Northern California's Parc Oakland Convention Center. During the production of the first film, *Silent Möbius: The Motion Picture*, Kikuchi had this to say about the popular manga artist.

"From a production point of view, he isn't around too much," says Kikuchi with a smile. "As an original creator, I think he's just great. He doesn't complain about how I adapt his work...not that I would let him."

The dynamic duo of Asamiya and Kikuchi have worked together for many years at Studio Tron, Asamiya's design company, which produces all of Asamiya and Kikuchi's work including the heavily anime in-joke infested manga-cum-music video *Compiler*. Because the two have worked together so extensively and for so long, they are thought to be interchangeable by the fans of their respective series.

"I guess our destinies are intertwined or something," jokes Kikuchi. "If Asamiya were to die, I'd probably die as well.... I hope to keep working with him



in the future as a single creative unit at Studio Iron."

When asked about future projects, Asamiya will not comment. However, he will say now that *Silent Möbius* has been released in a variety of media including the latest live-action feature set in the feudal days of Japan, the manga version of *Silent Möbius* will soon be reaching a climax.

"Yes, it's going to end soon," says Asamiya. "I had originally intended it to be told in three major parts. One of the reasons I'm going to end the series is that I want to end it while it's still interesting rather than keeping it going until it gets stale."

When it comes to *Silent Möbius*, even the name is interesting. Although Asamiya has been notably close-mouthed about its origins, Viz Comics' Fujii tells us that the word "möbius" has a little-known nuance that may give some clue to its meaning.

"In Japan, 'mobiusu' or 'möbius' is a term that suggests the scientific and the mysterious at the same time," Fujii says. "And like one of the German mathematician's famous strips, there's no end to the twists and turns in Asamiya's constantly involving story."

Yep, that's *Silent Möbius*, all right.

—Joshua M. Vachide

ANIMERICA: Let's start with a simple question. Why did you become a manga artist?

ASAMIYA: I didn't start out that way. In the beginning, I wasn't even sure I wanted to be one. But there was this computer game magazine called *Comptiq* just going monthly, and one of their editors who had seen the four pages I'd drawn for a fanzine asked me if I wanted to do a manga serial. I thought to myself, Well, maybe I'll get more work done if I'm under a deadline. I also hoped that it would be a chance to improve my art.

ANIMERICA: How was it in the beginning? Since you had no experience with long stories or serials, did you just learn as you went along?

ASAMIYA: It was tough, tough all the way, and it's still tough. In the beginning, I didn't even know how to carve zipatone. And for that first story, well, someone else wrote the script, but it was a monster. It was supposed to be a 24-page monthly, but the script had the content of sixty pages. I felt like I was crawling miles on my knees, getting that trimmed down.

ANIMERICA: When I saw your work from that era, I was impressed at how meticulous you were with the background art. Most new artists of the time could draw characters, but the backgrounds were usually out to lunch. But in your case, all your backgrounds were convincing.

ASAMIYA: Well, I really liked Katsuhiro Otomo's work, and I think I was pretty heavily influenced by that style. I still like his work.

ANIMERICA: Do you mean his style of establishing the location first and then expanding the world from there? For example, as in *Feeling Like It's War Already*?

ASAMIYA: Yes, and in his retelling of *Hansel and Gretel* as well.

ANIMERICA: I understand that work has a real cult following. It's interesting how the story retains a European flavor while still being uniquely Japanese.

ASAMIYA: That's true. And then there's *Domu*.

ANIMERICA: Ah, *Domu*...for some reason American fans of *Akira* always seem to discover this work next. When you do a story with futuristic cities, are you conscious of Otomo's perspective style?

ASAMIYA: Well, Otomo's perspectives are unique, aren't they? They're like a trompe l'oeil—they trick the eye. They're really interesting in their own right, but Otomo's the only one who can do them. The only one who's allowed to do them.

ANIMERICA: It almost seems like you're saying that Otomo's works were sort of a textbook for you in learning how to draw manga.

ASAMIYA: That's right, my very own textbook [LAUGHS].

ANIMERICA: When you first decide upon a plot for a particular manga, are you conscious of later multimedia expansions, such as animation, audio drama versions, or "image" music albums?

ASAMIYA: Oh, yes. I think I developed the habit because of that early computer game magazine.

ANIMERICA: Your work really seems to adapt to the trend of the times. It branches out from its source material into so many different channels, from



The Girls of Silent Möbius Rally Cheyenne

RAMP's formidable leader. Her past an enigma, the statuesque, silver-haired Rally's links to great mystical powers are shrouded in mystery.

HEIGHT: 176.0 cm
WEIGHT: 55.0 kg
BLOOD TYPE: Unknown
EYE COLOR: Blue
BIRTHDAY: Unknown
ASTROLOGICAL SIGN: Unknown
BIRTHPLACE: Unknown

I was pretty heavily influenced by Katsushiro Otomo's style. His perspectives are unique... Otomo's the only one who can do them. The only one who's allowed to do them.

manga to animation, into music albums, novels and merchandise...you must admit, that's fairly unusual.

ASAMIYA: *Silent Möbius* was designed with just that intention.

ANIMERICA: There are droves of female characters in *Silent Möbius*. Was it tough to write so many of them?

ASAMIYA: It wasn't a problem because after all, isn't there an infinite variety of women in the world? For me it was fun to work on ways to differentiate those six.

ANIMERICA: When you started *Silent Möbius*, did you already have voice actors in mind for the animated version?

ASAMIYA: Sure, to a certain degree. When I first submitted my project proposal, I didn't get a very positive response. The feeling was that it would be difficult to develop such a project. Fortunately, things have changed since then. At the time, though, I don't think there was another

manga even close to that kind of multimedia phenomenon.

ANIMERICA: This was a time when the idea of "image" albums [*original music tracks never included in the official soundtrack, which serve to establish setting or "tone" of the animation—Ed.*] were still considered by-products and not legitimate creations in their own right. Not like today, where it seems like everyone and his brother is cranking them out.

ASAMIYA: Absolutely. And to imagine they used to say that image albums could never outsell the animation itself [LAUGHS]. That's why my request that music and voices for the characters be considered from the very beginning was thought to be a little odd. I felt then and I still feel now that music is an essential part of the overall work. I also feel that a character's voice is very important. After all, sound is the one thing you can't get in manga, right? I've always thought the idea of having no sound media to complement manga is a little, well...*dull*.

ANIMERICA: That's not the kind of idea you usually hear from a manga artist.

ASAMIYA: Well, probably not.

ANIMERICA: There were quite a few image albums made in the beginning of *Silent Möbius*, weren't there?

ASAMIYA: Yes, we made quite a few. Since then, it seems as though everyone's been doing it. I hesitate to say it, but...well, I feel as though they all copied what we were doing. Maybe I should be grateful—after all, isn't imitation the sincerest form of flattery? [LAUGHS]

ANIMERICA: I find it interesting that you speak more from the standpoint of a producer than an artist.

ASAMIYA: I find that very flattering, actually.

ANIMERICA: *Silent Möbius* isn't something you completed as a separate work, is it? It was previously serialized in *Comic Comp*, and recently started to be published in *Comic Dragon*.

ASAMIYA: That's right, but now it's published quarterly. It's due to go monthly by the later half of this year.

ANIMERICA: Do you often consider the viewpoint or perceptions of your female readers when creating stories?

ASAMIYA: I'm not specifically conscious of my readers as either "male" or "female," no. I don't really differentiate between them, although female fans who find that my characters resonate within them are definitely on the increase.

ANIMERICA: Is that unexpected? You'd think Katsumi would have been the main character, but the cast around her seems to be getting all the attention these days.

ASAMIYA: Each of the main characters in *Silent Möbius* have a past and drama all their own. I'm always thinking of foreign TV drama series when I'm drawing *Silent Möbius*. I have images of things like *CHiPs* or *Charlie's Angels*. Those are ensemble shows, they have several main characters, so the character spotlight is completely different for each episode. Of course, in the case of *CHiPs*, John and



The Girls of Silent Möbius Katsumi Liquer

Daughter of the master sorcerer Gigelf Liquer, Katsumi wields her father's mystical abilities and the great sword "Grosspolina" with equally deadly efficiency in battle against the mysterious supernatural entities.

HEIGHT: 165.0 cm
WEIGHT: 52.0 kg
BLOOD TYPE: O
EYE COLOR: Blue-Purple
BIRTHDAY: August 1, 2006
ASTROLOGICAL SIGN: Leo
BIRTHPLACE: Hawaii





The Girls of Silent Möbius

Nami Yamigumo

The kimono-clad Japanese high-priestess Nami is inheritor of her family's ancestral legacy to wield an enchanted dagger, endowed with the powers of the legendary Kirin.

HEIGHT: 159 cm
WEIGHT: 48.0 kg
BLOOD TYPE: AB
EYE COLOR: Purple
BIRTHDAY: June 26, 2008
ASTROLOGICAL SIGN: Cancer
BIRTHPLACE: Japan

It wasn't a problem to write so many female characters for *Silent Möbius*. Isn't there an infinite variety of women in the world?

Ponch must always be involved somehow, but the focus is allowed to shift from time to time. Because I always have that kind of style in mind, I've never thought I would need to designate a single character as "main."

ANIMERICA: Isn't that style uncommon in Japan?

ASAMIYA: Yes, it is. In a typical Japanese production, the main character is always making a forced appearance and I've never cared for that. *Silent Möbius, Part One* [Parts One, Two and Three in Viz Comics' version—Ed.] doesn't do much more than introduce the individual characters, leading even the die-hard fans in Japan to comment, "*Silent Möbius* isn't into its main story yet, is it?"

ANIMERICA: A monthly manga serial makes a story's progress a long-term proposition. Focusing on each of six characters means you've got to take six months to do it.

ASAMIYA: Right. I actually once thought of ending the story within six months, but the whole thing just kept dragging on.

ANIMERICA: Admit it—is your own story the first thing you read in a magazine that runs your work?

ASAMIYA: Well, yes, my work is always the first thing I check.

ANIMERICA: What do you mean by "check"?

ASAMIYA: Whether there are any mistakes in the typesetting, or how the preview of the next episode is described. Basically, checking up on how the editor is doing his job.

ANIMERICA: It's been said that no matter how well-known one becomes, one can't be truly successful in sales until one makes inroads into the teen market. Now, you're pretty popular among young people in Japan these days, but then you've reached the age of thirty yourself, haven't you? You're already dealing with people a generation younger than yourself.

ASAMIYA: How true it is. [LAUGHS]

ANIMERICA: What do you think makes your work popular among teenagers?

ASAMIYA: There are some things about young people these days that I can't understand—that perhaps I *shouldn't* understand—but as to whether I've really entered the "thirties generation"...well, my way of thinking is still young. Of course, I'm speaking in terms of my work. When it comes to marketing, you've got to think like a grown-up at all times in order to make it in this business.

ANIMERICA: So your sensibilities as a creator are still young.

ASAMIYA: I'd like it to stay that way.

ANIMERICA: To keep young people interested in you?

ASAMIYA: For now, that would suit me just fine. There may be a lot of teenaged Asamiya fans right now, but eventually I'd like to gain the interest of fans in their 40s and 50s. I'd like to become an artist who is more capable in every way. My problem is that I become easily excited and rapidly

lose interest in any one thing. When something catches my interest, I'm completely hooked into it, but when that interest passes, inspiration deserts me in a flash.

ANIMERICA: So you're easily bored.

ASAMIYA: You got it. My goal is to create the kind of manga that'll hold people's interest. It's great to know that my work is exported overseas and that I have fans who enjoy it even in another language, but I've got to keep sight of the fact that right now, 80% of my market is in Japan. I'm dealing with the Japanese, and I know only too well how quickly they can become bored when an artist keeps drawing the same old manga, no matter how good or interesting or exciting that manga is. I like to keep my readers guessing. For example, you've probably noticed that I keep a lot of manga by other artists around here. I've never bought any of them until the last volume. My assistants are always asking me, "How can you just stop in the middle of a story?"



The Girls of Silent Möbius

Kiddy Phenil

A police officer crippled in the line of duty, Kiddy is recreated as a super-warrior with a cybernetic body. Kiddy uses her enhanced strength to battle AMP's many mystical and technological enemies.

HEIGHT: 166.0 cm
WEIGHT: Unknown
BLOOD TYPE: B
EYE COLOR: Purple
BIRTHDAY: October 4, 2005
ASTROLOGICAL SIGN: Libra
BIRTHPLACE: Australia



The Girls of Silent Möbius

Lebia Maverick

A "visionaire" who can send her consciousness into the worldwide computer network of the twenty-first century. The polished, blonde-haired Lebia is the keystone of AMP's technological defenses.

HEIGHT: 173.0 cm
WEIGHT: 54.0 kg
BLOOD TYPE: A
EYE COLOR: Blue
BIRTHDAY: March 18, 2001
ASTROLOGICAL SIGN: Pisces
BIRTHPLACE: Los Angeles

I'm always thinking of foreign TV drama series when I'm drawing *Silent Möbius*. I like ensemble shows, where the character spotlight is different for each episode.

ANIMERICA: Because they became dull?

ASAMIYA: Correct. I don't think I've ever bought a manga series to the last volume.

ANIMERICA: Maybe as a reader that's how it should be, quitting when it stops being interesting. And because you understand that, you've got firsthand experience with how finicky readers can be.

ASAMIYA: There are times when you are popular and times when you aren't. When you're not popular, the only place you can go is downhill. I think it's important to see how well you can keep up the creative tension despite temporary slumps.

ANIMERICA: You've said that you easily become bored. Have you ever decided to animate one of your works just to ward off boredom?

ASAMIYA: It's been known to happen. I tire of things so easily, it's a miracle that I'm continuing with a serial at all.

ANIMERICA: Have you ever considered working in a different market, such as

love stories or science fiction for older readers, who may not be familiar with the Asamiya name?

ASAMIYA: Actually, I'm doing that already. I'm especially interested in doing a manga about the last days of the Tokugawa shogunate, in mid to late nineteenth century Japan. It would aimed completely toward readers of age 25 and older. I've always liked doing things that others weren't interested in doing.

ANIMERICA: Isn't the end of the shogunate something that all Japanese authors would like to work on?

ASAMIYA: Well, there are lots of novels about that era, but not many manga artists have dealt with it. I'm interested to see how it'll come out myself.

ANIMERICA: Would you like to work with live-action?

ASAMIYA: If I were to develop a story about the end of the shogunate, it would have to be live-action.

ANIMERICA: A historical play that would avoid becoming glitzy?

ASAMIYA: Right, something that's more subdued.

ANIMERICA: How about the live-action video, *AMP in the Last Days of the Shogunate*? You know the one I'm talking about—the story that takes place during the days of old Tokyo, with the characters from *Silent Möbius* played by their original voice-actors, only in live-action. Is that what you had in mind?

ASAMIYA: *Last Days* is a juvenile version. I don't think it would go over well with businessmen and the older crowd. To be blunt, it's like an upgraded version of *Compiler*. I would like it if young people became more aware of that period in Japan's history, of the shogunate in its last days. People above a certain age are familiar with this period of drastic change, but the young people of today would probably have a hard time understanding anything more than the most superficial history. That's one of the reasons I made *AMP in the Last Days of the Shogunate*.

ANIMERICA: I've got to say it again—you speak more like a producer than as an

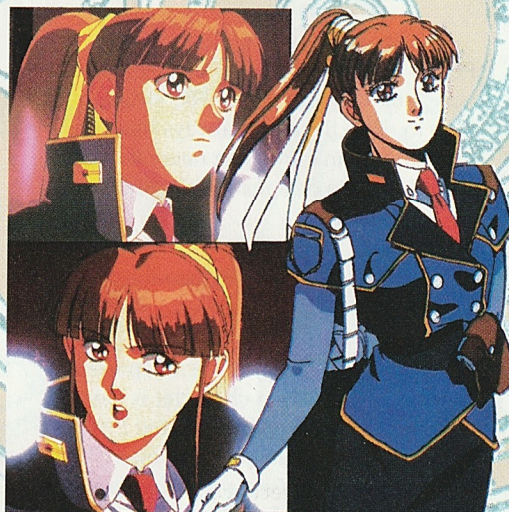
artist. You always seem to be thinking of how to build up the market first. Do you find it interesting to be involved in the production of your own works?

ASAMIYA: I'm not the type of person who insists, "It has to be done this way and only this way." Unless there's something that can be changed or updated from the original, I don't see the point in doing a remake of the manga for a different medium. There's a lot of animation that's nothing more than a carbon copy of the manga. Personally, I don't think that sort of animated comic strip is worth watching. Why bother?

ANIMERICA: What if a foreign artist wanted to draw *Silent Möbius* for an overseas edition?

ASAMIYA: I'd really like to see that. I think that would be interesting.

ANIMERICA: When the medium changes, the work has to go through other hands. Are you saying that allowing second-party adaptations makes the work as a whole more interesting?



The Girls of Silent Möbius

Yuki Soiko

Product of genetic experimentation and personally selected for AMP by Rally Cheyenne, the mascot-like Yuki is the youngest member of the team. Her psychic talent still dormant, her powers manifest only rarely, and then often without her control.

HEIGHT: 155.0 cm
WEIGHT: 46.0 kg
BLOOD TYPE: A
EYE COLOR: Brown
BIRTHDAY: September 10, 2010
ASTROLOGICAL SIGN: Virgo
BIRTHPLACE: Japan

ASAMIYA: Sure, but you don't see much of that kind of thinking in Japan. People tend to be rather...rigid.

ANIMERICA: I've heard that *Silent Möbius* is being considered for translation into Italian and Spanish editions. How do you feel about your readers in countries other than Japan?

ASAMIYA: I'm absolutely delighted.

ANIMERICA: That's the author in you speaking. What about the producer? Do you ever think to yourself, "I want to add something special for promotion in foreign markets"?

ASAMIYA: Even from a producer's standpoint, I'm just happy that my work is in English and available overseas. I'm not completely familiar with the foreign market yet, but I do think there might be a way of developing *Silent Möbius* for sale overseas.

ANIMERICA: Such as?

ASAMIYA: Well, if they don't go too far, I wouldn't mind if character names were changed, or if the content were a little different. I'd be interested in seeing such a *Silent Möbius* made by other people.

ANIMERICA: They have a fun system for that abroad, don't they? The concept of different writers creating stories based on the same character....

ASAMIYA: That isn't the thinking of people who hold copyrights in Asia. People who can't bear to have others interpret their works aren't worthy of being creators, in my opinion. I think it's great that many different people can look at a particular work and interpret it in their own, unique way.

ANIMERICA: Is it true that the storyboards for the first *Silent Möbius* aren't available anymore?

ASAMIYA: There's only been a second reprint.

I don't know if I've really entered the "thirties generation." My way of thinking as a creator is still young, but you do have to think like a grown-up just to make it in the business.

I know too well how quickly readers can become bored. I tire of things so easily, it's a miracle that I'm continuing with a serial at all.

ANIMERICA: Are the storyboards by Michitaka Kikuchi?

ASAMIYA: Yes, Kikuchi did them.

ANIMERICA: You supervised?

ASAMIYA: No, I was just watching from the sidelines. After all, a manga artist has no business in the animation studio. I think it's best if the manga artist stays in his own little universe—with his manga. My early influences were close to animation, so I know what it's like in the animation industry. I've seen original artists intervening in the studio and messing things up too many times. I say that's breaking the rules. If you want to make animation strictly in accordance with the original artist, then you have to go all the way and direct it, the way Otomo did.

ANIMERICA: Do you think animation is different?

ASAMIYA: Animation is a collective effort to begin with.

ANIMERICA: You've been doing manga for how long? Hasn't it been about six years since your debut?

ASAMIYA: I've been a manga artist for about seven years.

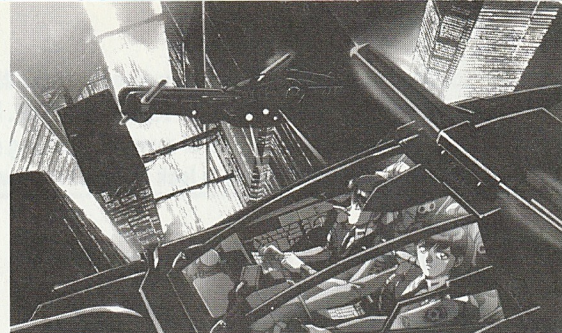
ANIMERICA: We talked about Otomo previously, but what about your other influences? Tezuka, perhaps?

ASAMIYA: For me it's more like Shotaro Ishinomori (*Kamen Rider*, *Cyborg 009*) than Tezuka. There's also Leiji Matsumoto. His *Space Cruiser Yamato*, of course, but also his entire "Matsumoto World"—*Gun Frontier*, *Sexaroid*, *Captain Harlock*, *Galaxy Express 999*, the *Emeraldas* stories.

ANIMERICA: Is it the mecha you've been influenced by? Or maybe the characters, or the stories?

ASAMIYA: It's everything. When it comes to Matsumoto, it's the total milieu.

ANIMERICA: I'm sure you've become friends with many of your fellow manga artists.



Do you ever get together and talk about your art?

ASAMIYA: No.

ANIMERICA: Never? You don't have artist-to-artist discussions on the theory of manga?

ASAMIYA: Artists don't talk about things like that.

ANIMERICA: I've heard that Rumiko Takahashi is constantly talking about the shape of a character's mouth in panel so-and-so on page such-and-such. She talks about it to everyone. Have you ever heard that?

ASAMIYA: No.

ANIMERICA: But there are some people who are into those kinds of details, expressions with the character's hands, for example. Do you think that there's one theory of manga?

ASAMIYA: I don't think so. If there is such a thing as a "theory of manga," it would be whether it's interesting or dull. Period.

ANIMERICA: But some people actually do ponder those difficult concepts.

ASAMIYA: The world is a big place.

ANIMERICA: Is there a story you'd like to draw one of these days?

ASAMIYA: I'd like to do something like *Mazinger Z* (*Tranzor Z* in the U.S.).

ANIMERICA: A *Mazinger Z* of your own?

ASAMIYA: Something of my own that fully utilizes the setup. The giant robot story is a genre I'd like to do. There haven't been that many successful robot stories since *Mazinger Z*, have there? I'd like to make one of those. And I'd like to reduce the lines in the robot *drastically* [LAUGHS].

ANIMERICA: To make it more simple?

ASAMIYA: Yes. Like something that might show up in *Tetsuwan Atom* (*Astro Boy*).

Someone once asked why Eiji Tsuburaya never got the recognition he deserved from the Japanese people. Maybe the Japanese have some kind of complex regarding native creations...they never seem to look at what's right under their noses.

ANIMERICA: Are there any foreign artists you're interested in?

ASAMIYA: I don't have that many, but there have been a few. The French artist Moebius, for example. Not too much foreign information really makes it to Japan, does it? What you can find at *Manga no Mori* in Tokyo is about it. It occurs to me that Walt Disney was an artist who's been successful in every aspect an artist can be—in his art, in developing his characters, even as a businessman. When I was a child I didn't see much of Disney animation, and what I did see I didn't like. Now, at age 30, I can finally see the things that make it good.

ANIMERICA: Is that because you're now involved in animation and are more familiar with the processes involved?

ASAMIYA: That, and the charisma of the characters. Mickey Mouse has his own character. Minnie, Donald, Daisy—they all have personality. I think the classic Mickey, the one drawn with those few precious lines, is a real work of art. Recently I saw an art book which featured Mickey Mouse and thought to myself, "Wow, this is great! Disney is great!" Not only did I think of Disney himself as a

great artist but more importantly, I realized that Disney was careful never to limit his audiences to a certain age. Kensho Ikeda [noted anime, live-action, cinema, TV critic—Ed.] asked once why the Japanese as a people were never able to give *Ultraman* and *Godzilla* special-effects director Eiji Tsuburaya the recognition he deserved. Perhaps Japanese people can't recognize something great when they see it. Maybe the Japanese have some kind of complex regarding Japanese creations, and everyone just follows everyone else in saying that whatever comes from abroad is automatically great. The people of Japan never seem to look at what's right under their noses.

ANIMERICA: Do you find pleasure in what you're doing?

ASAMIYA: It's often tough, but also fun. But I'm always thinking of what else I want to do, so I tend to quit the moment I start disliking something.

ANIMERICA: Will you be increasing your workload?

ASAMIYA: I think I've reached a time in my career when I can prioritize my workload to handle only that which I really want to do. I'm also coming to the age where I

shouldn't be pushing myself too hard. They say that thirty is the most productive age, but in this line of work, it's hard to be thirty years old. Compared to when I was younger, my concentration seems to be wearing thin. All things considered, if I still want to continue making quality work, I think I'm going to need to trim down the amount of work I do.

ANIMERICA: As a writer, is there a script of yours that you'd like to let other, younger people handle?

ASAMIYA: If there were such an opportunity, I'd like to do that. But I still have the desire to be drawing myself.

ANIMERICA: Is there anything you want to focus on the most in your drawing? Certain details?

ASAMIYA: I think manga is a compilation of small tasks, just like animation. So I wouldn't focus on any one of them, but on each of them at once.

ANIMERICA: Finally, do you have anything to say to your American fans?

ASAMIYA: I appreciate your constant support and encouragement. I'll be happy if you just read my works. ☆

ANIMERICA Special Feature!

Asamiya or Kikuchi? How to Tell the Difference

Silent Möbius manga artist Asamiya and anime director Michitaka Kikuchi have worked together for so closely and for so long that to many fans they're virtually indistinguishable. ANIMERICA shows you how to tell them apart.

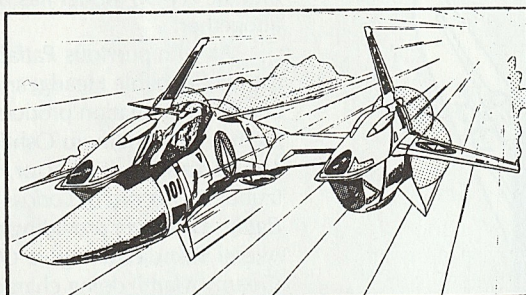
POINT OF DIFFERENCE	MICHITAKA KIKUCHI	KIA ASAMIYA
Vocation	Character Designer/Animator	Manga Artist
Goofy karaoke microphone-wielding self-portrait features...	Piece of shrimp sushi in place of head	Hand-lettered "NOW PRINTING" sign in place of head
Got that all-important "big break" in spring of 1988 with...	<i>Sonic Soldier Borgman</i>	<i>Silent Möbius</i>
Production studio with which most often associated	Studio Tron	Studio Tron
Created magic-using main character who uses god-given abilities to...	Help others and promote goodwill (Magical Emi)	Send enemies screaming back to hell in bleeding chunks (Katsumi Liquer)
They fight, and fight, and fight and fight and fight in...	World-domination giant robot violence fest <i>Hades Project Zeorymer</i>	Hack 'n' slash beast-morphing adventure series <i>Dark Angel</i>
Brazenly features half-nekkid anime babes without shame in...	<i>Good Morning Althea</i>	<i>Compiler</i>
War-mongering series in which group of authority figures must combat entities from the world beyond	<i>Sonic Soldier Borgman</i> (a group of teachers)	<i>Silent Möbius</i> (a group of cops)
Group leader with suspiciously 1950s "concentration"-type card game first name	Memory Gene	Rally Cheyenne
Same group leader has...	Familial ties to enemy forces and mysterious past	Familial ties to enemy forces and mysterious past
Food-linked last name of bosomy female lead	Farm	Liquer
Ensemble cast member most often made butt of jokes by other, snootier female cast members	<i>Borgman's</i> weak-kneed male lead, Ryo	AMP's mascot-like youngest member, Yuki Saiko
Audiophile-influenced name of crime-fighting team	Sonic	AMP
Does crime-fighting team include zaftig cyborg female?	Yes	Yes
In homage to animal kingdom enemy group affectionately known as...	Youma Machine Beasts	Lucifer Hawks (can also be read "youma" in original Japanese characters)

—Shamelessly compiled by the ANIMERICA editorial staff (Toshi, Julie, Taka and Trish)

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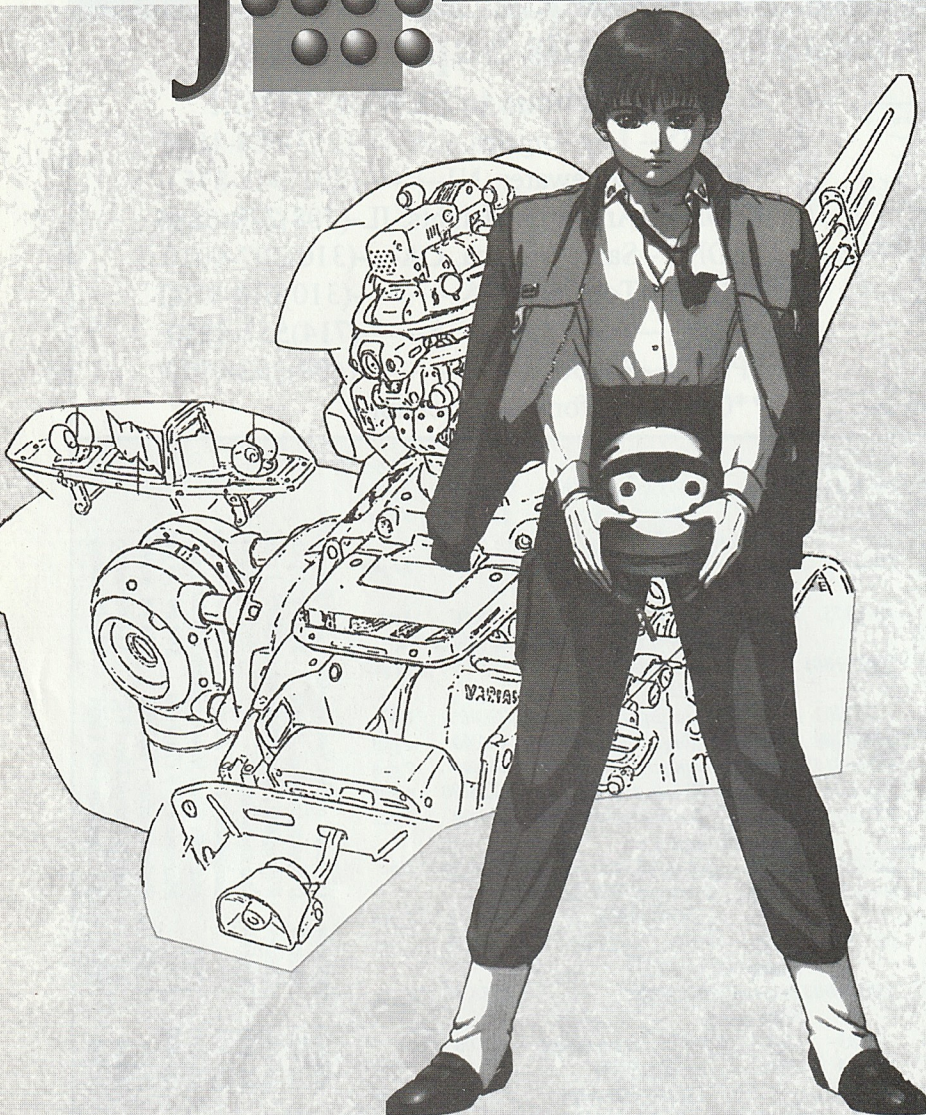
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What's new? What's hot? And where can I see it? In this section, ANIMERICA brings you the best of the current releases and the latest news straight from the Japanese anime industry.



Calling All Mobile Police Units! Civil Unrest Expected this Summer

Tentatively titled *Patlabor 2*, the long-awaited sequel to the multimedia phenomenon (several OAVs, a television series, a theatrical release) is scheduled for Japanese theatrical release this summer. Although story details are still vague, news on the basic setting plus character and mecha designs by some of the biggest names in the industry is gradually coming into view.

Three years after the ending of the first *Patlabor* film, many changes have occurred within Special Vehicles Division 2, Section 2. Of the original members, only Hiromi Yamazaki and Captain Kiichi Goto still remain. In charge of the entire second SV division is Shinobu Nagumo, previous Captain of SV 2, Section 1.

Trigger-happy Isao Ota works as a labor instructor for the police, while Noa Izumi and Asuma Shinohara leave the force entirely with a transfer to Shinohara Heavy Industries' labor development team. Mikiyasu Shinshi heads the general police department after being promoted to General Affairs, while mad engineer and labor-god-at-large Seitaro Sakaki retires to leave his second Shigeo Shiba in charge of SVD 2's maintenance crew.

From a mecha perspective, the Mobile Police have incorporated a new generation of patlabors including the AV-2 Variant, a successor to the main patlabor from the previous series, the AV-98. The AV-98 also features an updated power source utilizing superconductive electric motors and Shinohara Heavy Industries' "HOS" or "hyper-operating system," first seen in the original *Patlabor* theatrical release. From initial production sketches of Noa's AV-98 ("Alphonse"), a missing license plate and miscellaneous

police accouterments such as police lights, symbol and shield seem to indicate that the AV-98 model has been scrapped altogether.

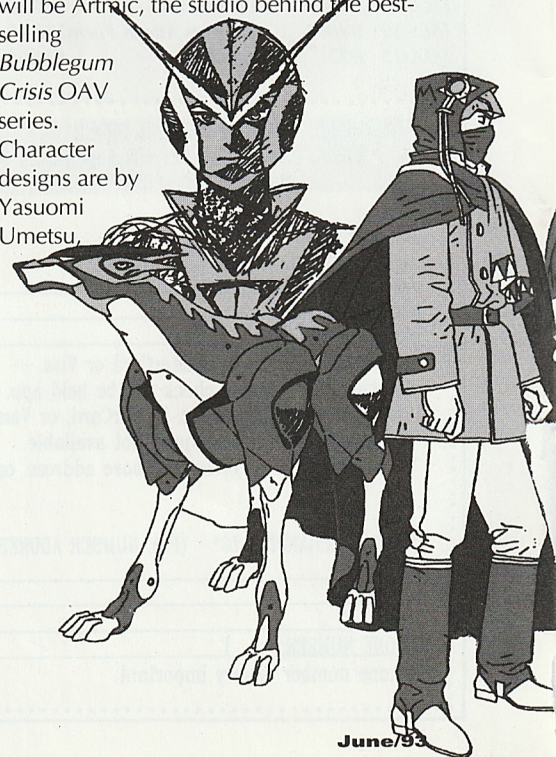
As with previous *Patlabor* projects, the ever-capable Headgear will be in charge of animation production. Leading them will be Mamoru Oshii (*Angel's Egg*, *Urusei Yatsura*) as director, with Yutaka Izubuchi (*Record of Lodoss Wars*, *Aura Battler Dunbine*) providing mecha designs, Akemi Takada (*Kimagure Orange Road*, *Creamy Mami*) doing character designs, with support and backup by *Patlabor* creator and manga artist Masami Yuuki.

In addition to this venerable staff, three other well-known mecha designers—Hajime Katoki (*Gundam 0083*, *Gundam V*), Shoji Kawamori (*Macross*, *Dangaio*) and Mamoru Ito (*Patlabor* movie)—will join forces to bring fans what is sure to be the most visually exciting mecha action this summer. Look to ANIMERICA for more details as they develop.

Cyborg of the People, Cashan

Tatsunoko Production, the provider of such memories as Hurricane Polymer, Space Knight Tekkaman, Science Ninja Team Gatchaman and in recent days, Legend of Heavenly Sphere Shurato, is commemorating thirty years in the Japanese animation business by releasing a remake of its 1973 television classic New Man Cashan as a four-volume OAV series.

Collaborating with Tatsunoko to produce the animation for *New Man Cashan* will be Artrac, the studio behind the best-selling *Bubblegum Crisis* OAV series. Character designs are by Yasuomi Umetsu.



whose distinctive style can be seen in such works as *Megazone 23, Part Two* and the "Presence" segment of the highly regarded anime anthology *Robot Carnival*. Distribution is by Columbia Japan.

The OAV story follows the plot of the original TV series. In the future, the robots of the world unite under a mastermind android known as "Bryking Boss." The formerly servile robots then rise up to subjugate humanity. Three years after the fall, a rumor circulates among the enslaved populace—a mysterious man named "Cashan" is fighting the robots single-handedly in order to liberate the people. Captive humanity awaits his coming, but no one knows the identity of their savior.

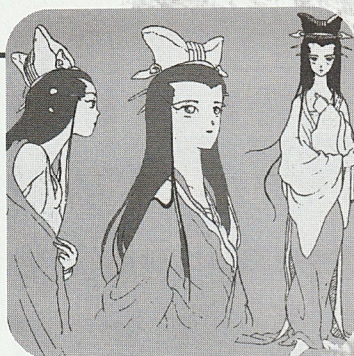
Of course, fans of the previous series know that "Cashan" is really Tetsuya Azuma, formerly a human and now a cyborg with awesome powers. Tetsuya has chosen to become a cyborg in order to defeat Bryking Boss and also to clear the name of his father, the unfortunate inventor of "BK-1," the insane android that became Bryking Boss. Also involved in the struggle is Tetsuya's former girlfriend, Luna Kamizuki, who joins the human resistance to search for the vanished Tetsuya. Luna possesses the MF gun, the sole weapon capable of destroying the mechanical soldiers of the android army.

Though it is yet to be seen how fans will take to Artmic's new, updated interpretation of this anime legend, the eagerly awaited revival of *Cashan* promises to be a major event of the summer. Release date of the first 30-minute volume is scheduled for August 21.

Chinese Ghost Story to Haunt Theaters—Animatedly

Combining all the best elements of a martial arts action feature—impossible kung fu feats, supernatural sorcery, netherworld demons and intrepid heroes, plus an exotic otherworldly romance—the now-classic Hong Kong cult film series Chinese Ghost Story goes into its fourth production, this time as an animated feature.

Based on classic Chinese fables of spirits and demons, the new animation follows a plot similar to the first of the live-action *Chinese*



Ghost Story movies by telling the story of carefree young apprentice Nin, dispatched by his boss to a deserted village on an errand to collect debtors' payments. Stopping to spend the night in an abandoned temple, Nin has an otherworldly encounter with the beautiful ghost Ni. Once the only daughter of one of the village's wealthiest men, Ni was killed in the mountains by bandits, her lifeless body abandoned in the woods.

Unable to flee the Earth upon her death, her spirit was captured by a forest-demon, and she is now forced to entrap the hapless young men who pass through the forest, stealing their souls and life force in service to her master. Ni targets Nin for her next unfortunate victim, but falls in love with him instead. Hilarious mayhem and touching romance result as she struggles to hide her human lover from her demonic master, and Nin desperately tries to uncover the mystery of his beautiful phantom love.

As with the previous live-action features, the animated *Chinese Ghost Story* will be feature the efforts of Hong Kong producer Tsui Hak. Actual animation production will be handled by an unspecified Taiwanese studio. Running time is tentatively scheduled at about 90 minutes, with a theatrical release date set for 1994. ☆

News You Can Use—Hot Off the Presses!

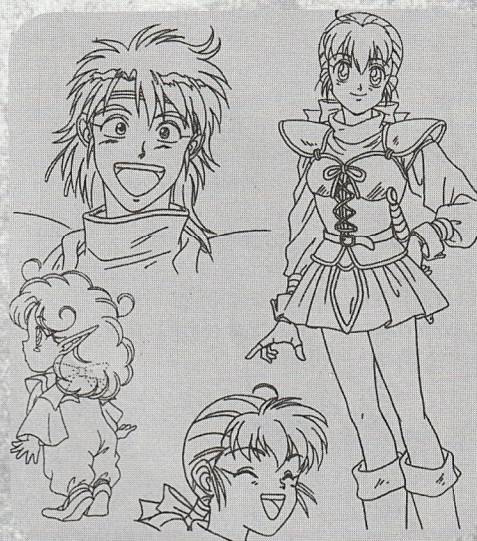
HOT FLASHES

Originally a novel and then a manga serial published in *Comic Comp*, the very silly comedy series *Fortune Quest* is coming soon as four-volume OAV series from Kadokawa.

Chiefly a satirical reworking of the fantasy genre, *Fortune Quest* follows the (mis)adventures of a truly motley band—a navigator with no sense of direction, a fighter clad in bamboo armor, a thief in loud colors, a sage with amnesia, a wizard who casts spells in baby talk and a giant who communicates plenty with animals but doesn't talk much otherwise.

With role-playing game parodies

aplenty (such as dragons who force the group to join them in D&D-type games, and an exclusive "gold card" designed to cover all the monetary needs of one's journey), *Fortune Quest* is sure to be a favorite among sword and sorcery fans



with a sense of humor.

Featuring animation production by J.C. Staff, the first volume of *Fortune Quest* is scheduled for a fall release. Plans for a Super Famicom version are also being discussed, although details are still vague. Look to ANIMERICA for more news as it develops.

First published in Shogakukan's *shojo* or girls' manga magazine *Weekly Shojo Comic*, *The Blue Seal* is a story based on Japanese mythology depicting the clash between a tribe of ogres and the relentless ogre hunters bent on their destruction. The problem is that the ogres consume human souls, and in order to lose this awful power, they must...ahem, consort with the enemy.

This is the rather unlikely premise (for manga aimed toward the younger set, anyway) of a new *Blue Seal* "CD book," an original drama/music recording based on a pre-existing manga or story. The so-called "virtual recording" technique used for this CD book is currently enjoying popularity in Japan right now and is said to provide an extra "up close and personal" quality to the recording by incorporating special stereo-type effects. (Ahem.)

Release is scheduled for May 26, with a suggested retail price of ¥3000.

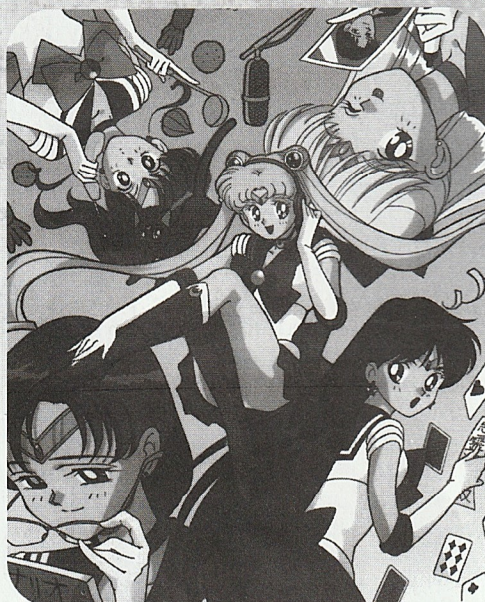
Those lovely soldiers are back in a whole new format! Unlike previous slapstick-style *Sailor Moon* cassette books, *Sailor Moon Volume Three*, "Prelude of Romance"



takes a dramatic shift to a serious theme and reveals a whole new side to everyone's favorite sailor-suited sweethearts.

"Prelude of Romance" is set chronologically between the end of the first *Sailor Moon* television series and the follow-up series, *Sailor Moon R*, currently airing on most Tokyo stations. The story concerns the end of the sailor soldiers—Sailor Moon, Sailor Mars, Sailor Mercury, et al.—their death in battle and reincarnation back on Earth (doesn't that sound cheery!).

On sale now from Movic's "Animate Cassette Collection" series, the "Prelude of Romance" cassette book should be of interest to any fan of either *Sailor Moon* series. The cassette retails for ¥1980 at better animation stores near you (if you live in Japan, that is). ☆



VIDEO CLIPS

JAPAN'S TOP TEN

The Bestselling Animated Videos, Compiled by Original Confidence Research Company (As of 3/8/93)

- 1 **Bastard!! • Volume Four**
Shueisha/Pioneer LDC • ¥4800
- 2 **No Need for Tenchi! Demon Emperor Ryou 5**
Pioneer LDC • ¥4800
- 3 **Silent Möbius 2**
CIC/Victor • ¥9800
- 4 **Raijin- Oh, "Everyone's In Earth Defense Class"**
Toshiba EMI • ¥6800
- 5 **Ah! My Goddess • Volume One**
Kodansha/TBS/KSS • ¥5300
- 6 **This is Greenwood V**
Victor • ¥5800
- 7 **Moldiver 1**
Pioneer LDC • ¥4800
- 8 **Giant Robo 2**
Bandai • ¥5800
- 9 **Lovely Soldier Sailor Moon 1**
Toei • ¥3100
- 10.. **New Century GPX Cyber Formula 11 • Volume Three**
VAP • ¥4800

WHAT THEY SAY THEY'RE WATCHING

The Top Ten Anime TV Shows in Japan Based on Animage Magazine Readers' Polls (From 2/11/93 thru 3/10/93)

- 1 **LOVELY SOLDIER Sailor Moon R**
TV Asahi • Saturdays @ 7:00 p.m.
- 2 **The Poltergeist Report**
Fuji TV • Saturdays @ 6:30 p.m.
- 3 **Dragon Ball Z**
Fuji TV • Wednesdays @ 7:00 p.m.
- 4 **Papua of the South Seas**
TV Asahi • Saturdays @ 7:30 p.m.
- 5 **Irresponsible Captain Tyler**
Tokyo TV • Mondays @ 6:00 p.m.
- 6 **Crayon Shin-Chan**
TV Asahi • Mondays @ 7:00 p.m.
- 7 **LITTLE WOMEN Nan and Jo**
Fuji TV • Sundays @ 7:30 p.m.
- 8 **Get a Grip, Tsuyoshi**
Fuji TV • Sundays @ 6:00 p.m.
- 9 **Miracle Girls**
Japan TV • Fridays @ 5:00 p.m.
- 10 **HERO EXPRESS Might Guy**
TV Asahi • Saturdays @ 5:00 p.m.

...AND WHAT THE RATINGS SAY THEY'RE WATCHING

The Tokyo Top Ten Anime TV Shows Based on Rating Shares Compiled by Video Research (During the Week of 2/1/93 thru 2/7/93)

- 1 **Sazae-San**
Fuji TV • Sundays @ 6:30 p.m.
- 2 **Dragon Ball Z**
Fuji TV • Wednesdays @ 7:00 p.m.
- 3 **Crayon Shin-Chan**
TV Asahi • Mondays @ 7:00 p.m.
- 4 **Encyclopedia Kiteretsu**
Fuji TV • Sundays @ 7:00 p.m.
- 5 **The Poltergeist Report**
Fuji TV • Saturdays @ 6:30 p.m.
- 6 **Doraemon**
TV Asahi • Fridays @ 7:00 p.m.
- 7 **Get a Grip, Tsuyoshi**
Fuji TV • Sundays @ 6:00 p.m.
- 8 **LITTLE WOMEN Nan and Jo**
Fuji TV • Sundays @ 7:30 p.m.
- 9 **Papua of the South Seas**
TV Asahi • Saturdays @ 7:30 p.m.
- (TIE) **LOVELY SOLDIER Sailor Moon R**
TV Asahi • Saturdays @ 7:00 p.m.
- 10 **Gobo-Chan**
Japan TV • Mondays @ 7:30 p.m.

Highlights from the Top Japanese Anime Magazines

Between the Covers

MAY, 1993

Japan publishes more books and magazines than any other nation in the world. Naturally, this means more publications devoted to anime and manga. Use this handy guide to keep up with the exciting (but sometimes confusing) anime and manga publishing world.

ANIMAGE (Tokuma)

NEWS & UPDATES: "SAILOR MOON's Last Episode—An Encore Presentation" • Close-Up on YADAMON Manga Artist Suezzen • The 15th Annual Anime Grand Prix Awards • More

REGULAR FEATURES: Top Ten Characters • Love Horoscope • Anime Karaoke • Animation People • Let's Go to the Movies • TV Animation World • OAV Hotline • More

SHORT STORY: "Letter from the Red Devil," by C.W. Nicol

MANGA FEATURES: NAUSICAA OF THE VALLEY OF WIND by Hayao Miyazaki • YADAMON by Suezzen • LITTLE MOLE MOGUTAN by Noriko Nagano

GIVEAWAYS: IRRESPONSIBLE CAPTAIN TYLER's Azalyn • Harumi Pin-Up Poster • Voice Actors Profile Book

ANIMEDIA (Gakken)

NEWS & UPDATES: Readers Vote on the Ten Best New Shows • A New Change in SAILOR MOON • "Featuring the 'Ghost Hunters'" (THE POLTERGEIST REPORT, GHOST SWEEPER MIKAMI) • "Door to the Secrets of..." (MIGHT GUY, DRAGON BALL Z, IRRESPONSIBLE CAPTAIN TYLER) • More

REGULAR FEATURES: Video Journal • Anime-Eye • TV Anime City • Media Land • Idol Pin-Up • Line Art Section: GUNDAM-V • Monthly Close-Up • New TV Show Voice Actor Data File • Movie News • More

MANGA FEATURE: WHIRLWIND WILD BOY ARCO by Miku Nanase and The Arco Project

GIVEAWAYS: Anime Song Book • TAKAMARU and AH! MY GODDESS Poster • Winners of the ANIMEDIA Lottery

ANIME V (Gakken)

NEWS & UPDATES: Readers Vote on the Ten Best OAVs of 1992 • "The Lovely Warriors of NG KNIGHT RAMUME & 40 DX" • "THIS IS GREENWOOD FOREVER" • NEW CENTURY GPX CYBER FORMULA • More

REGULAR FEATURES: New OAV Navigator • Catch Up With Popular Voice Actors • "Create Your Own OAV" • The Column Battle Royale • The New Items • Anime Scramble • Video Games Section • Music and Event Info • Readers' Page

SPECIAL FEATURES: Interview with Pink Aomata, Original Artist of the New OAV FIGHT!! • "Invitation to DraCon '93 (Voice-Acting and Anime Song Contest Hosted by ANIME V and ANIMEDIA)"

MANGA FEATURE: NADESHIKO SHICHIMI ("Udon the Pepper Beauty") by Takeru Miyao

GIVEAWAYS: ALL-PURPOSE CULTURAL CAT GIRL and FIGHT!! Poster

NEWTYPE (Kadokawa)

NEWS & UPDATES: "Usso's Battle" (GUNDAM-V) • "Replay: SAILOR MOON R" • "Bad News Travels Fast," IRRESPONSIBLE CAPTAIN TYLER • More

REGULAR FEATURES: The Official Art of GUNDAM-V • Newtype Express • Anime Land • Express • Scramble • Newtype Forum • Fanzine Review • AV Marketplace • Modeling Section • Time Capsule Anime Snapshot Gallery • More

MANGA FEATURES: FIVE STAR STORIES by Mamoru Nagano • DARK ANGEL by Kia Asamiya •

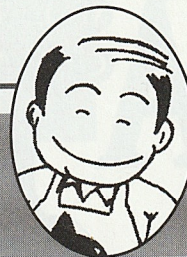
MARIONETTE GENERATION by Haruhiko Mikimoto

SHORT STORY: "Equal Genesis," by Takahashi and Murase
GIVEAWAYS: PATLABOR 2 Line Art Book • IRRESPONSIBLE CAPTAIN TYLER Poster

A Unique Perspective from our Manga and Anime Insider

FROM THE FOREST

As a manager of Manga no Mori ("Comics Forest"), the largest comic/anime merchandise specialty chain in Japan, **Takashi Oshiguchi** has been involved in the industry not only as a retailer but as a journalist for more years than he can count. In addition to his many articles, Oshiguchi writes occasionally for ANIMAGE magazine and has had his own column in the comic trade journal COMIC BOX.



MECHA DESIGN

A role just as important as the character designer in Japanese animation productions is that of the mechanical designer. The image of a giant robot grating its gears and sprinkling oil is practically irresistible to anime fans.

It's really only since the landmark show *Space Cruiser Yamato* that fans started noticing mecha design. At that time, a group of young science fiction fans who called themselves "Studio Nue" handled all the designs for spaceships. Drawing the extremely detailed ships was a laborious task, and difficult to master. The members of Nue took a new approach by drafting perspective designs of their ships from every possible angle to accommodate the demands of the animators for any scene. Because of this attention to detail, the mechanical gadgets and spaceships populating anime shows were no longer just background props. Nue's devotion had elevated them to a new level.

After the success of *Yamato*, the next step in the history of mecha design would have to be *Mobile Suit Gundam*. Designer Kunio Okawara created all the basic designs of the now-omnipresent mobile suits, starting with the Gundam itself and the ubiquitous Zaku.

One of the realities of the anime industry is that Japanese TV animation is inevitably sponsored by toy manufacturers. Mecha that appear in animated shows are therefore destined to be merchandised as toys, and are designed with this premise in mind. No matter how great a design looks on a cel, if it doesn't look good when translated to three dimensions, the toy doesn't sell.

Okawara is said to have made wooden prototypes when he designed his successful mecha. This style of designing for 3-D in

turn inspired a whole new group of enthusiasts—plastic model or "pura moderu" fans—and subsequently resulted in figure artists known as modelers. Modelers went even further to create a realistic world view of three dimensions born from the two-dimensional plane of anime. This trend reached its height in later years when the members of Studio Nue (including Kazuki Miyatake and the immortal Shoji Kawamori) created the now-classic Valkyrie for *Macross*.

Continuing in this tradition of multi-tasking in design today are artists who are active not only as mecha designers but as illustrators as well, such as *Patlabor* designer Yutaka Izubuchi and Makoto Kobayashi, designer of the current, revamped *Giant Robo*. Artists who design both the characters and mecha for themselves have also appeared, such as Mamoru Nagano in his sprawling creation *Five Star Stories*. Nagano's fashion design school background has very likely contributed to his unique design sense.

But the difficulty of addressing both character and mecha designs remains. In a TV series, just designing the guest mecha every week is an arduous task, with an endless stream of deadlines. Mecha designers in their devotion to detail may concentrate too much on the mecha, to the neglect of the characters. A typical example would be the all-too-familiar animation video that has great mecha but lackluster characters.

Designers of the future will hopefully make more animation where both interesting characters and mecha are incorporated in the overall world. And as importantly, designers must be able to assert their own convictions to toy manufacturers and make solid business negotiations. New design ideas can't come about when designers simply respect corporate whims.

OAV Release Schedule Coming Soon in Japan

Direct from Japan, this month's most accurate and up-to-date original animation video release schedule.

★ = Not yet known. ♥ = Series reviewed in this issue. X = Recommended for mature viewers only.

ON SALE	FORMAT	TITLE	ORDER NOS. (VHS/LD)	SOLD THRU	PRICE (VHS/LD)	LENGTH	PRODUCTION COMPANY
6/1	VHS/LD	New Century GPX Cyber Formula 11 • Round Six	VPVV-63120 /VPLV70223 (CAV)	VAP	¥4800/¥4800	0:30	Sunrise
6/9	VHS/LD	Free-Kick Toward Tomorrow 12	TYVY-1088/TYLY-1088	Toshiba EMI	¥9000/¥7800	0:95	Ashi Production
6/11	VHS	Ushio and Tora 7	SA4462	Shogakukan/ Toho Video	¥4800	0:27	Pastel
6/18	VHS/LD	Fight!!	★	Pony Canyon	¥4800/¥4800	Approx. 0:30	J.C. Staff
6/21	VHS/LD	Gunnm, "Rusty Angel"	JSVA-22201/JSLA-22201 (CAV)	KSS	¥5300/¥5300	0:30	Animate Film
6/21	VHS/LD	Wolf Guy • Volume Six	BES-789/BEAL-512 (CAV)	Bandai Visual	¥4800/¥4800	0:27	Visual Workshop
6/21	VHS/LD	Takamaru • Chapter Six	BES-798/BEAL-550 (CAV)	Bandai Visual	¥4800/¥4800	0:25	J.C. Staff/ Studio Live
6/23	VHS/LD	Ys, Citadel of the Heavens • Volume Four	KFOVA-43/KIVA-159/KILA-53 (CAV)	Kadokawa Shoten /King Record	¥5800/¥5800	0:30	Tokyo Kids
6/23	VHS/LD	NG Knight Lamune & 40 DX • Volume One	KIVA-163/KILA-69 (CAV)	King Record	¥5800/¥5800	Approx. 0:30	Ashi Production
6/25	VHS/LD	Bastard!! • Volume Six	900129/PIVS-7029/PILA-1151 (CAV)	Shueisha	¥4500/¥7800	0:30	A.I.C.
6/25	VHS	Be-Bop • Final Chapter	TMO1384	Toei Video	¥12381	0:50	Toei Animation
6/25	VHS/LD	Moldiver 4	PIVA-1010/PILA-1142 (CLV)	Pioneer LDC	¥4800/¥4800	0:30	A.I.C.
6/25	VHS/LD	Pops	★	Shueisha/Victor	¥4900	0:30	Madhouse
6/25	VHS	Be-Bop, Final Chapter	TMO1384	Toei Video	¥12381	0:50	Toei Animation
JUNE	VHS	New Angel Cop • Volume One	★	JVD	★	Approx. 0:30	DAST
JUNE	VHS	Tale of a Narrative Fantasy Ellcia, "Last Melody"	JHE-400	CIC/Victor	¥4800	Approx. 0:40	J.C. Staff

The best of the current releases and the latest news straight from the American anime industry. With the emergence of U.S.-based anime subbing and dubbing companies, it's more important now than ever to know who's releasing what, where, why and how. **Dateline: America** is your one-stop U.S. anime information source.



Sequel to Live-Action Guyver Announced

The *Guyver*, a live-action sci-fi action/adventure film starring Star Wars' Mark Hamill and currently renting at Blockbuster Video chains across the country, is now in production as a theatrical sequel, revealed an industry source to ANIMERICA recently.

Promising a "much darker tone," director Steve Wang (*Kung Fu Rascals*) says that the comedic overtones of the first *Guyver* live-action film will be conspicuously absent in the sequel. Wang, a long-time fan of anime and manga, is a frequent attendee at Japan's "Wonder Festival" modeling convention, held two times every year in downtown Tokyo.

Before he directed *Guyver*, Wang was known primarily in the anime and manga community as a creator of special effects for science fiction films including the "predator" suit in the box office hit *Predator*, starring Arnold Schwarzenegger as a mercenary come face-to-face with a "most dangerous game" hunter from another world.

The *Guyver* is originally the creation

of Japanese manga artist Yoshiki Takaya, whose ongoing *Bio-Booster Armor, Guyver* comic is currently being serialized in Japan by Tokuma in their *Shonen Captain* manga magazine. Takaya's tale of the insectoid, cybernetically enhanced fusion of man and alien is also available as a twelve-episode English-dubbed OAV series from L.A. Hero/U.S. Renditions. Each volume contains two 30-minute episodes and retails for \$24.95. Three volumes have been released to date.

Wang is said to have extensively researched Takaya's original comic and both animated ver-

sions of the story, *Bio-Booster Armor, Guyver* as well as *Guyver, Out of Control*, soon to be released as a one-shot OAV from L.A. Hero/Dark Image Entertainment. *Out of Control* was first released in Japan during 1986 and features a different story and continuity than the *Bio-Booster* series. L.A. Hero/D.I.E.'s 55-minute subtitled version will retail for \$34.95 and is scheduled for a June release.

Guyver II will feature the musical talents of Magnitude 8's Les Claypool III. Claypool is known as the composer of Wang's last feature, *Kung Fu Rascals*, and is the creator of additional background music or BGM for L.A. Hero/U.S. Renditions' *Bio-Booster Armor, Guyver* as well as L.A. Hero/U.S. Renditions' *Macross II, "Lovers Again,"* now playing as a theatrical feature in theaters across the country. Look to ANIMERICA for more details as they develop.

Subtitled Grave of the Fireflies from CPM

It is postwar Japan, just weeks before American troops arrive for occupation. In the city of Kobe, a boy lies dying in a train station. By his body lies a

small metal candy container. A janitor, not sure what to make of its contents, pitches it into the night. As fireflies float softly around it, the ghostly figures of the boy and his little sister emerge....

Billing it a "testimony of the human spirit which shines even brighter in the face of adversity," New York-based Central Park Media has announced that they will release *Grave of the Fireflies*, a heartbreaking account of two children adrift in the sea of misery surrounding postwar Japan.

Grave of the Fireflies is based on the original novel by Akiyuki Nosaka which first premiered in Japanese theaters on April 16, 1988. The 88-minute film is written and directed by Isao Takahata (*I Can Hear the Ocean*), and features production by the world-famous Studio Ghibli (*Crimson Pig, My Neighbor Totoro*).

Central Park Media will release *Grave of the Fireflies* in stereo and in English, subtitled in "Mangarama," a trademarked process which enhances subtitle legibility by shifting the letterboxed film up and placing the subtitles on the black border at the bottom of the screen. *Grave of the Fireflies* will retail at a suggested list price of \$39.95 and is scheduled for a June 2 release.





Post-Apocalyptic Tale Genesis Survivor Gaiarth from AnimEigo

North Carolina-based AnimEigo, a leading releaser of subtitled Japanese animation in the United States, recently announced final release dates and pricing for its video releases over the next eight months, starting with Genesis Survivor Gaiarth, Stage II this June.

In the aftermath of the "Big War," civilization has collapsed and the surviving inhabitants of Gaiarth, both human and robotic, eke out a living in a technological graveyard. After defeating the evil Beast Master in *Stage I*, Ital and his amnesiac war-android friend Zaxon free a mysterious elf from the clutches of a fearsome mechanical "Campdragon," setting in motion a terrible plan that threatens all life on Gaiarth.

Genesis Survivor Gaiarth, Stage II was first released in Japan on December 9, 1992. Both 45-minute OAVs, *Stage II* and its predecessor *Stage I*, feature production by Artmic (*Bubblegum Crisis*) and are released through Toshiba EMI (*Stage I* was released earlier last year, on April 22). AnimEigo's subtitled release will be in stereo and retails for \$34.95. Viewers are cautioned that it contains "mild violence and profanity."

Upcoming releases include old as well as new favorites. *Ten Little Gall Force* and *Scramble Wars* will be combined into one volume to create the "Super-

Deformed Double Feature," described by AnimEigo as a "double helping of deranged parody" in which the animators of Artmic's *Gall Force*, *Gaiarth* and *Bubblegum Crisis* do parodies of their work; the first of three *AD Police Files* (the manga version of which is currently running in this magazine) in August; *Dagger of Kamui* in September; *My Youth in Arcadia* in November; and something loosely translated as *The Biker Gangs of Shonan Beach* in January, a new genre "totally without a U.S. equivalent," according to AnimEigo president Robert Woodhead. ANIMERICA will feature more details at a later date.

ANIMERICA Special Report

A Convention of Their Own

The budget was microscopic; the location (two hours from metropolitan New York) remote. But ChibiCon, the Eastern seaboard's first anime convention, was a con with heart. Jeff Yang reports from anime ganster-land.

STONY BROOK, NY—Call them the "geographically challenged." Anime fans along the Eastern seaboard have long harbored vague but persistent feelings that the real action was going on somewhere else. After all, the really good retail places, the big fan groups (and yes, the conventions) are all out West, a \$600 plane ticket away. Thanks to the valiant efforts of Chet Jasinski and the Atlantic Anime Alliance, East Coast fans finally got what they were waiting for—ChibiCon, the very first East Coast anime convention which graced the weekend of April 16.

Nearly three hundred fans from as far away as Akron, Ohio gathered for a lineup of events that included panels on "Anime Online," "Anime Parodies," and "Zen and the Art of Translating"; a well-attended anime karaoke session; and an exhaustive slideshow on the history of manga by Epic Comics' Jo Duffy (*Akira*). New subbing company A.D. Vision delivered a special screening of their premiere release, *Devil Hunter Yohko*, while the first episode of the anime game show "Don't Touch That Dial" aired to a studio audience that, unfortunately, knew far more than the

VIDEO CLIPS

AMERICA'S TOP FIVE

The Bestselling Anime Videos, Based on Pre-Orders Compiled by Capital City Distribution, Inc. (April, 1993)

- 1 Laughing Target**
U.S. Manga Corps • \$34.95
- 2 Dominion: Tank Police Part Two (Dubbed)**
U.S. Manga Corps • \$29.95
- 3 Urusei Yatsura TV Volume Seven**
AnimEigo • \$39.95
- 4 Urusei Yatsura OAV Volume Four**
AnimEigo • \$39.95
- 5 Captain Harlock Volume One**
Malibu Comics • \$19.95

embattled contestants (typical interchange—MC: "In the American series, what was the name of Speed Racer's car?" GUEST: "Um...the Mach-One?" CROWD: "Mach-FIVE, dummy!"). Creative categories such as "God Doesn't Know This," "Nadia of the Blue Light Special" and "Great Robot Shows of the Past" neatly balanced out excruciating technical delays and fun was had by all.

ChibiCon's status as a subsidiary of the "I-Con" science fiction convention led to some unfortunate difficulties, not the least of which was the refusal to participate by all major U.S. anime companies other than A.D. Vision (convention screening policies had resulted in a dealers' room dominated by video bootleggers). Best news at the con—after a networking symposium bringing together club leaders throughout the Atlantic area, the groundworks have been laid for ChibiCon to go independent as soon as next year. Until then, we leave you with a question from one of "Don't Touch That Dial's" more innovative categories, "Really Dumb Questions."

"What was the name of the spaceship in the series *Space Cruiser Yamato*?" (Answers in a future issue of ANIMERICA.) ★

Although it's usually the artists who get all the glory, there could be no anime or manga if there wasn't a dedicated corps of people working behind the scenes to produce our favorite pastime. *Anime Q & A* brings you mini-interviews with the industry professionals who make it all possible.

Jeff Yang talks with Viz Comics Managing Editor Satoru Fujii about Kia Asamiya's stunning belles-with-spells manga series *Silent Möbius*. Translated by Matt Thorn and James Hudnall, *Silent Möbius* has been one of Viz's most popular titles since 1991 when *Part One* of the series was published. Graphic novel compilations of the first two parts were published in 1992 and sold out with magical speed; *Silent Möbius, Part Four* begins in July.

- Q:** Could you elaborate more on the story of *Silent Möbius*?
- A:** *Silent Möbius* is about an organization called "AMP," which stands for "Abnormal Mystery Police." It's basically a special police division which consists of six young women who have some kind of supernatural ability. Together they battle the evil beings known as "entities" or "Lucifer Hawks" from the other world.
- Q:** What will happen in *Part Four*—or do we really want to spoil this?
- A:** We can sneak a peek. In *Part Four*, the secret history of leader Rally Cheyenne will be revealed. She's a crossbreed...she's half entity. And she has a younger sister, who sides with the entities.
- Q:** Is it Rally's father or mother who's the entity?
- A:** The father is the entity. *Part Four* is going to be very interesting. The first two issues deal with Katsumi's boyfriend, Roy, who's been introduced in earlier parts. Now he's been transferred to a special police division.
- Q:** To AMP?
- A:** No. A different division, one that deals with a particular drug problem. A drug which is a little bit like steroids. But magical steroids.
- Q:** So this drug makes you more powerful.
- A:** Yes, but if you take it too long, it turns you into a monster. And at the end, the connection between the entities and the drug will be revealed....
- Q:** Is there a reason why all of the people in AMP are female?
- A:** Well, in Japan, and probably most of East Asia,

supernatural abilities are associated with women. In archaic or primitive religions, for instance, the medium is always female.

- Q:** But Katsumi's father is also a wizard....
- A:** Well, yes. But he's not Japanese, at least.
- Q:** On the more technical side, what do you think of Kia Asamiya's technique?
- A:** Asamiya's a relatively new artist. All of a sudden, he has several new titles going on at once, so he climbed to stardom fairly quickly. His style is really appealing to readers who've seen lots of animation. It's got strong facial expressions, and some of the framing techniques he uses are very cinematic, like a director....
- Q:** On the American side, who translated *Silent Möbius*?
- A:** Our translations usually happen in two stages. First there's the translation from Japanese into English and then another person, usually an established comic writer, refines the translation. The *Silent Möbius* literal translations for the first three parts were done by Matt Thorn, who's also doing both phases of translation for *AD Police* and *Nausicaä, Part Three*. For *Möbius*, he has a rewriter—James Hudnall, who's done lots of things for us in the past. Literal translations for *Silent Möbius, Part Four* are being done by Toshifumi Yoshida.
- Q:** I understand that fans sometimes complain about Viz's translation style, saying "You've got that wrong...."
- A:** Nothing at Viz is ever translated *wrong*. Every decision we make is done for a reason. There's no shortage of native speakers of Japanese here at Viz! When we translate we try to keep the spirit of the original, keep the characters properly in focus. In Japanese, there are many ways to make a character distinct—for example, there are dozens of ways just to say the pronoun "I." In English, what you can do is very limited, so you need to employ certain techniques in order to be able to distinguish the characters easily through their speech patterns. In *Silent*

Möbius, each character has two sides—tough fighting woman and sensitive young girl, both of whom have their own feelings. Through his writing, we feel Jim has reflected these aspects very well.

- Q:** In Japan, is *Silent Möbius* very popular?
- A:** Yes, among people who like both anime and manga. This is one of the most popular comics right now among those types of readers.
- Q:** Is it generally more popular among guys?
- A:** Actually, yes. It is more popular among boys. Considering the type of comic it is, it's quite popular among girls, too.
- Q:** Has the *Silent Möbius* series sold well here in the States, compared to other Viz Comics?
- A:** In terms of sales, the early issues of *Crying Freeman* and, of course, *Ranma 1/2* are higher...but then again, *Silent Möbius* is popular in its own way with a particular kind of fan.
- Q:** American anime and manga fans sometimes tend to "adopt" characters as their own. Have any of the characters become particularly popular?
- A:** Katsumi is supposed to be the main character, but in Japan, the other five girls are actually more popular. Yuki seems to enjoy the most popularity. She's the youngest girl, and she can foretell the future.
- Q:** Do you have a theory on why she's become a Japanese fan favorite?
- A:** I don't know...some Japanese men like young, cute-type girls. I'm sure a different character is more popular in America.
- Q:** In terms of your own personal likes and dislikes, do you have your own favorite character?
- A:** I like Katsumi. She's a spunky girl...strong-willed. I personally like Katsumi very much.
- Q:** So unlike the fans in Japan, you don't seem to like Yuki the best....
- A:** Hey, it's my personal preference. No one said I had to have a reason for it [LAUGHS].

Jeff Yang is a New York-based freelance writer.

Video Release Schedule Coming Soon in America

News on the latest releases from the American subtitled and dubbed animation industry. ★ = Unlisted/Unknown. ♥ = Series reviewed in this issue.

SCHEDULED RELEASE	FORMAT(VHS/LD)	TITLE	CATALOG NOS.	SOLDTHRU	PRICE (VHS/LD)	NOTES
6/2	Subtitled VHS	♥ Grave of the Fireflies	CPM 1053	Central Park Media	\$39.95	Critically acclaimed theatrical release; features production by Studio Ghibli
6/15	Subtitled VHS	Jrusei Yatsura • TV Volume Eight	AT092-108	AnimEigo	\$39.95	Episodes 27-30 of TV series
6/15	Subtitled VHS	♥ Genesis Survivor Gaiarth, Stage II	AT093-003	AnimEigo	\$34.95	Features character designs by Hiroyuki Kitazume (<i>Char's Counterattack</i>)
6/25	Subtitled LD	Kimagure Orange Road LD Volume One	AT093-001	AnimEigo	\$64.95	Four 25-min. OAVs (first of three-volume OAV/movie LD collection)
JUNE (NATIONWIDE) RELEASE THROUGHOUT SUMMER AND EARLY FALL	Dubbed/Subtitled Theatrical Release	Urotsuki Doji: Legend of the Overfiend	★	Anime 18	★	35 mm print as seen in Japan; both subtitled and dubbed versions currently in release
JUNE	Subtitled VHS	♥ Guyver, Out of Control	DIE-04	L.A. Hero/Dark Image Entertainment	\$34.95	One-shot 60-minute OAV loosely based on Yoshiaki Takaya's manga
JUNE	English VHS	Ultraman, "Toward the Future" • Volume Six	UAV-07	L.A. Hero/Ultra Action Video	\$14.95	Sixth 23-min. episode of Australian TV series
JUNE	Dubbed VHS	Superdimensional Century Orguss • Volume Five	USR-VD22	L.A. Hero /U.S. Renditions	\$24.95	Episodes 10-11; 55 min.
JUNE	Dubbed VHS	Superdimensional Century Orguss • Volume Six	USR-VD23	L.A. Hero /U.S. Renditions	\$24.95	Episodes 12-13; 55 min.
JUNE	Dubbed VHS	Doomed Megalopolis	★	Streamline Pictures	\$29.95	First of four 60-min. OAV volumes; directed by Rin Taro (<i>Battle Angel Alita, Galaxy Express 999</i>)
JUNE (NOW PLAYING) IN NY, SF, LA AND OTHER MAJOR MARKETS	Dubbed Theatrical Release	The Speed Racer Show	★	Streamline Pictures	★	35mm print of TV episodes; features Alpha Team remix of original theme (including "erotic" version during end credits)



Ultra-Exciting News from Harvey Comics

Look! Up in the sky! It's neither bird, nor plane, nor even the latest incarnation of the not-so-dead Superman. It's Ultraman, Japan's favorite national superhero! Fresh from the success of a three-part mini-series, Harvey Comics has announced that Ultraman will be striking his famous pose in comic stores across the country on a monthly basis, starting this summer.

The success of this series depends as much on the character's personal story as it does on the superhero's battles," says Harvey Comics editor Sid Jacobson. "This will be a more human story than any of the previous installments in the series."

Although Harvey's new monthly *Ultraman* series will focus on the hero's human aspect, Jacobson tells us that the most gigantic superhero of them all (300 feet tall by one recent measure) will still have to face and combat some of the most fearsome monsters in the universe.

Readers new to the *Ultraman* series will be brought up to date by a special preview issue (*Ultraman* #-1) which recounts tales of Ultraman's previous incarnations. The next issue (*Ultraman* #1) jumps right in with the introduction of a brand-new Ultraman, a Japanese-American who must grapple with the challenges of his dual heritage.

Ultraman will continue to be drawn by Ernie Colon (*Magnus, Robot Fighter*), with more scripts by Dwayne McDuffie and acclaimed artist Ken Steacy creating all-new painted covers. Each 32-page color issue will retail \$1.75 US/\$2.25 CAN. Harvey has not yet announced whether they will market a polybagged direct-market version as with the previous *Ultraman* mini-series.

Nausicaä's "Magical Adventure" From Tokuma

Spirited, visually exciting, heartwarming stories designed to please both children and adults, Tokuma Publishing's "Magical Adventure Series" has already brought three of legendary animator Hayao Miyazaki's most beloved animated features into print—My Neighbor Totoro, Laputa, Castle in the Sky and Kiki's Delivery Service. This fall, Nausicaä will join them with a special two-volume, full-color graphic novel based on the 1984 animated feature, Nausicaä of the Valley of Wind.

Adults and children alike are sure to enjoy this book," said Managing Editor Satoru Fujii of Viz Comics, which will continue to distribute all four books to comic book stores all over the world. "Because all illustrations are taken from actual animation cels, reading the book is like reliving the pleasure of watching *Nausicaä* all over again."

As the American division of the Japanese publisher Tokuma Shoten, Inc., the Seattle-based Tokuma Publishing will handle all distribution outside of the comics market. Each volume in the two-volume hardcover set will retail for \$19.95 US (tentatively) and is scheduled for a September release.

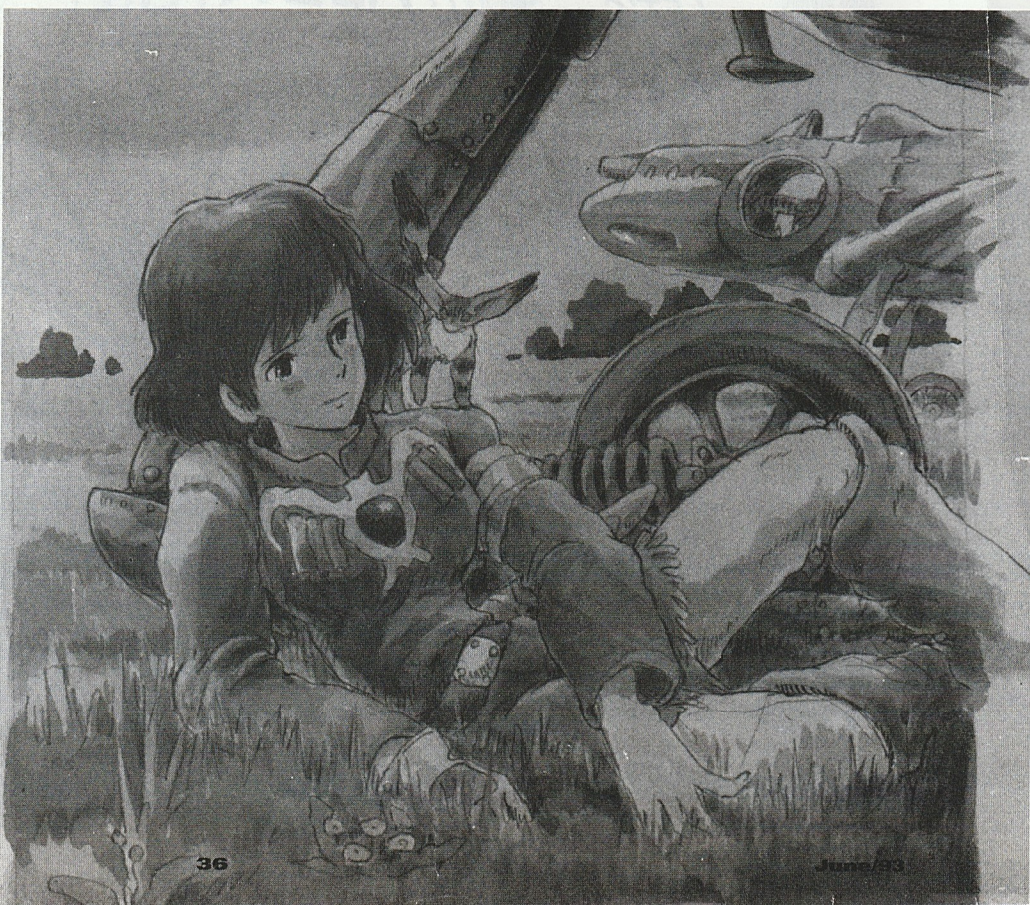
Caution! High-Speed Ninjas Ahead

With the exposure the series has received after being broadcast on MTV, the animated Speed Racer TV series is currently enjoying a renaissance. This June, a whole new generation of fans will discover the thrill of speed with a new crossover four-issue mini-series from Eternity/NOW Comics.

The four-issue concept is unique in that two of the books will be published under the Eternity Comics label and two by NOW Comics," said Joan Weis from NOW. "This will allow *Speed Racer* fans to discover the crazy world of *Ninja High School* and vice versa. The fans of one should definitely love the other."

The race begins with Speed in the Mach-V and Asrial and Jeremy in Professor Steamhead's automobile invention. Although both cars have been specially outfitted for the race, the new gadgets may not be enough to counter the efforts of an international band of assassins known as the "Car Acrobatic Team," who plan to infiltrate the race and steal the blueprints for a new secret weapon. Will Speed and the gang be able to stop them?

Speed Racer Featuring Ninja High School will be written by Mark Levine,



with pencils by Gary Morita, inks by Dan Schaefer and covers by NHS creator Ben Dunn. Each issue will be polybagged, feature approximately 26 color pages and include a set of special trading cards. Retail price is listed as \$2.95 US/\$3.70 CAN for Eternity; \$2.50 US/\$2.95 CAN for NOW Comics.

New manga, industry trends, and more! Extreme Close-Up

"Is that a daisy, dear, or are you just glad to see me?" All kidding aside, girls' or shojo manga has got to be one of the most misunderstood subgenres in the entire manga industry. With this new column and his ongoing Ph.D. thesis (an industry first, as far as we know), manga scholar **Matt Thorn** is aiming to do for shojo what Schodt did for manga in general.

And Now For Something Completely Different...Maison Ikkoku From Rumiko Takahashi

As fans have probably already noted, Viz's newest title *Maison Ikkoku* should be on the shelves by the time you read this. One of Takahashi's earlier works, *Maison Ikkoku* is a radical departure from her standard action and slapstick fare.

What makes *Maison Ikkoku* stand out is its realistic, contemporary setting. There are no elements of fantasy or science fiction, no outrageous martial arts or excursions into an unlikely past. The leading man is a college student struggling to get through college. The leading woman is the new (not to mention young and beautiful) manager of the student's apartment building who...well, I don't want to spoil the surprise (even though Viz's already spilled the beans in VIZ-IN, Vol. 5.3!), but suffice it to say that the college student, Yusaku, falls hard and heavy for new manager Kyoko and cancels his plans to leave the *Maison Ikkoku* and rid himself of its rather peculiar tenants.

In the sense that it deals with (relatively) ordinary people and romance, *Maison Ikkoku* is the closest Takahashi has ever come to a shojo or girls' manga series. *Maison Ikkoku* originally ran in *Big Comic Spirits*, a manga magazine geared toward a young adult audience which includes many women, but most of Takahashi's work appears in so-called

shonen or boys' manga magazines whose primary readers are junior high and high school boys. This raises a question that manga commentators, to the best of my knowledge, have never addressed—how is it that Takahashi has achieved such phenomenal success in the completely male-dominated domain of "boys'" manga?

Maybe the answer lies in Takahashi's uncanny (and sometimes embarrassing) grasp of the adolescent male psyche. She has never hesitated to spice up her work with titillating images of scantily-clad women and girls, but whereas many "boys'" manga artists massage the egos of their readers by playing up to macho fantasies, Takahashi usually pokes fun at her readers' preoccupations and insecurities. Rather than being turned off, readers seem to welcome the opportunity to laugh at themselves. Nowhere does Takahashi do this better than in *Maison Ikkoku*, which might explain why this "romance" was such a big hit with male readers in Japan. So set aside your preconceptions, and enjoy. ★

Matt Thorn has worked as a translator for Viz for a very long time. His many manga projects include Sanctuary, Horobi, 2001 Nights, Ranma 1/2 and Mermaid Forest. Two years ago he began working on a Ph.D. in anthropology at Columbia University and is currently writing a thesis on Japanese women's comics. With people such as Matt and the talented Gerard "The Trouble with Girls" Jones working on Viz's adaptation of Maison Ikkoku (now on sale in finer comic shops everywhere), how can you go wrong?

Fresh From the Forest

The writer of "From the Forest" and *Manga no Mori* manager **Takashi Oshiguchi** recommends the five hottest manga titles in Japan. Guaranteed ripe for reading!

1Berserk

Written by Kentaro Miura • Published by Hakusensha
Adventures of a band of mercenaries during the Middle Ages; features characters influenced by horror/fantasy writer Clive Barker. By the author of *King Wolf and Japan*.

2Wind User

Written by Takayuki Takashi • Published by Kodansha
A refreshing tale of a modern high school student who masters the winds and takes on demons (with the help of his brave and charming partner). Debut work of a new artist.

3Machine Fantasy Rune Masquer

Written by Yutaka Izubuchi • Published by Fujimi Shobo
A work of high enthusiasm by Yutaka Izubuchi, better known in the U.S. as the mecha designer for *Pallator* and other anime features. For the first time ever, Izubuchi handles everything from script to finished art.

4M.S. Generation

Written by Rei Nakahara • Published by Bandai
Companion story set during the days of early *Gundam*. The accomplishments of anonymous soldiers are illustrated in meticulous detail. Includes the manga version of the recent OAV, *Three Beastkeepers*.

5Space Hero Story

Written by Takehiko Ito • Published by Kadokawa Shoten
Science-fiction comedy based on the nostalgic space opera (the main character is the grandson of Edmund Hamilton's *Capture Future*). Although this is his only manga work, Ito's previously done cover art for many novels.

Japan's Manga Top Ten

- 1 Slam Dunk • 11**
Takehiko Inoue • Shueisha • ¥390
- 2 The Poltergeist Report • 10**
Yoshihiro Togashi • Shueisha • ¥390
- 3 Blossoming Youth • 7**
Natsumi Itsuki • Hakusensha • ¥390
- 4 X • 3**
CLAMP • Kadokawa Shoten • ¥390
- 5 H2 • 2**
Mitsuru Adachi • Shogakukan • ¥390
- 6 The Baby and Me • 4**
Marimo Hagawa • Hakusensha • ¥390
- 7 From Afar • 2**
Kyoko Hikawa • Hakusensha • ¥390
- 8 Living Game • 7**
Mochiru Hoshisato • Shogakukan • ¥500
- 9 This is Katsushika Ward's Kameari Parkside Police Box • 79**
Osamu Akimoto • Shueisha • ¥390
- 10 Compiler • 3**
Kia Asamiya • Kodansha • ¥500

The Bestselling Comics, Compiled by Books Nippan, Japan (May, 1993)





Ever wanted to play a character from your favorite anime or manga? Video games can add a whole new dimension to enjoying anime. Each month, ANIMERICA's video game experts share tips and advice to help you achieve your highest score ever. By Eugene Lee



Space Cruiser Yamato

System	Type	Manufacturer
PC Engine Turbo; Grafik-16, Super CD-ROM (Japan)	Simulation	Human Entertainment
Price	Available	Notes
¥7800	On Sale Now	Incredible animated sequences make this a must-buy for fans of the series

It is the year 2199 A.D. Earth has suffered an invasion from the alien race of Gamilas and has nearly been made into a dead planet from the radioactive scars of planetary bombing. Mankind is facing certain destruction within one year when salvation is offered by Starsha, queen of the planet Iscandar. In order to receive the devices that can decontaminate the radiation, the Earth Defense Force resurrects the great WWII battleship *Yamato* and departs on a 148,000 light-year journey....

Based on the classic *Space Cruiser Yamato* TV series (known as *Star Blazers* in the U.S.), the goal of your mission is clear—to save the human race!

□ BASIC PLAY

There are two parts that make up the composition of game play. The visual part involves long animated sequences that are used as prologues to upcoming scenarios, with epilogues that detail the results of your actions. These sequences, which include simultaneous audio, are almost as good as watching the TV series itself.

Playing the role of Captain Okita on the main bridge, you must make the right decisions that will save the *Yamato* from the predicament of each scenario. It is your responsibility to gather information about the current state of affairs, come to a conclusion, and then take the appropriate action. Because this segment of the game runs in real-time, slow thinkers are dead thinkers, the situation is constantly changing, and the possibility of battle is constantly looming on the horizon.

Of course, a mission of this importance cannot be accomplished alone. To succeed in this game, you must think ahead and use your dedicated crew to their best advantage.

□ BRIDGE CREW OF THE YAMATO



Susumu Kodai Leading combat officer of the *Yamato*, in charge of the ship's onboard array of weapons...including the wave-motion gun!



Daisuke Shima Head navigator and pilot of the *Yamato*



Yasuo Nanbu Assistant combat officer; acts as command center for fighter deployment and instructions



Gi'ichi Aihara Communications officer for the *Yamato*



Shiro Sanada Technical expert and tactical advisor for combat-related situations



Kenjiro Ota Assistant navigator, in charge of overseeing repairs on damage sustained by the *Yamato*



Hikozaemon Tokugawa Chief engineer, responsible for the replenishment of the ship's wave-motion energy



Yuki Mori Operations officer. Her duties include examining intelligence reports on enemy ships and weapons

□ Tactics and Notes

There may be well over an hour's worth of real-time animation and sound accompanying the game during the visual segments, including short "We Have Failed" sequences. Voices are digitized from real human voice-actors, and the music is just superb—the game even starts off with a variation of the original Japanese theme song used in the TV series!

The simulation-game follows the same trend as other quest-type games, moderately difficult to solve when played for the first time, relatively simple once the solution is discovered. Being directly in charge of eight crew members could be challenging in its own fashion, since each individual performs at least one useful function.

There are some difficulties involved with the game. The major problem is that all dialogue is in Japanese—the characters speak it during the visual segments, and all communications that take place between you and your bridge members are displayed in Japanese text.

The other difficulty lies in saving the current game status. Even if you manage to beat a certain scenario, you will be forced to replay should you decide to continue playing at a later time.

For animation followers who grew up with *Yamato*, this game is a wellspring of fond memories. "Space Cruiser Yamato, The Game" is not something to be thought of as a game to beat, but as a way for everyone who loves the series to relive the adventure again and again. In other words, our *Star Blazers* have returned!

Fast-Forward Japan New and Upcoming Video Game Releases

Street Fighter II

System	Type	Manufacturer
Sega Mega Drive/ NEC PC Engine	Action	Capcom
Price	Available	Notes
No Price Set	June	Not to be confused w/SNES version

The Japanese arcade release of the STREET FIGHTER II CHAMPIONSHIP EDITION will be retitled with the slightly confusing name STREET FIGHTER II' (the apostrophe is called a "dash" in Japanese) for NEC's PC Engine and Sega's Mega Drive release this June.

Both game systems will feature a new six-button pad to allow various moves which, sadly, will be sold separately. Game play is similar to the SNES release with an additional bonus stage, as well as several digitized voices such as "YOU WIN!" not found in the SNES version.

Also unlike the SNES release, players may now pit the same character against him or herself without having to enter a secret code. The four boss characters may be played as well. SF II' cartridges will feature more memory than the SNES release, with the PC Engine at 20 megabits and Sega at 16 to 20 megabits.

Although Nintendo has yet to announce plans for a SF II' release, sources say the industry giant will most likely bring out their STREET FIGHTER II' TURBO, featuring a 20% increase in speed, more moves for each character (even Chun Li will have a fireball attack), and an incredible 32-megabit format.

Ys IV: Mask of the Sun

System	Type	Manufacturer
SNES	RPG	Tonkin House
Price	Available	Notes
No Price Set	No Date Set	12-megabit game w/battery backup

Here's some great news for YS I & II fans who've been wanting something more. Unlike the side-scrolling YS III, YS IV will be a continuation of the story from YS I & II. The main selling points of YS IV are that the game will be an original story released only for the Super Famicom; that it will not require fighting just for the sake of increasing experience level; and that it will take advantage of the game controller for ease of playability. YS has been released on many systems to date including various personal computer formats, the Famicom, the Super Famicom and the PC Engine. Multiple OAV volumes based on the game are also available.

Mobile Police Patlabor

System	Type	Manufacturer
PC Engine CD-ROM	Digital Comic	Riverhill Soft
Price	Available	Notes
No Price Set	No Date Set	Part of a multimedia onslaught (books, OAVs, etc.)

From the creators of the *Aim for the Top!* Gunbuster digital comics comes Riverhill Soft's new project, MOBILE POLICE PATLABOR—SCHAFT CHAPTER (working title). Also a digital comic, PATLABOR for the PC Engine's Super CD-ROM will be based on the storyline of the OAV series ("Return of the Gryphons," "Schaft's Counterattack," "The Ultimate Battle," and "Game Over," among others), enabling players new to the world of exciting mobile police action to enjoy it every bit as much as more experienced players.

—Toshifumi Yoshida

More than just entertainment, anime is one of Japan's most valuable (and enjoyable) forms of cross-cultural communication. In this section, ANIMERICA asks Japanese and U.S. industry professionals to evaluate the latest in this diverting and enriching art form. By Yoshitaka Ishigami



Lovely Soldier Sailor Moon

Sold Thru
Toei Video

Format
VHS/LD

Price
¥3193/¥9200

Length
30 min./100 min.

Release Date
On Sale Now

Notes
LD includes episodes 1-4

At precisely 7:00 o'clock on the night of March 7, 1992, anime fans sat glued to their sets waiting for a show that would become the biggest thing in sailor suits since *Sukeban Deka*. It had been some time since anime had virtually disappeared from prime-time TV, and when the zany anime series based on the *shojo* manga of the same name *Goldfish Alert!* made its debut, it was an instant hit. By the time those lovely soldiers made their appearance, the fans were crazy with pleasure.

There are two traditions in Japanese television shows made for children, animation and live-action. Toei is the only film company which produces both. During the 30+ years it's been doing business, Toei has produced numerous film, animation and television drama classics. *Sailor Moon*, which is heavily salted with influences from all of them, shows that Toei *knows* entertainment.

Sailor Moon began as a one-shot story "Her Code-Name is Sailor V" by Naoko Takeuchi which originally ran in Kodansha's *shojo* manga magazine *Run-Run*. A masked girl detective solving cases while in sailor suit is not in itself unusual in the *shojo* genre, and it took a producer at TV Asahi with an eye toward the future to spot the story's potential and propose that it be animated.

In Japan, the "sailor suit" is a standard uniform for female students and therefore a familiar outfit to Japanese women of all ages. The adventures of a sailor-suited girl had already proven itself popular among male fans with Shinji Wada's *Sukeban Deka*, and by the time *Sailor Moon* was finally made into a serial television drama, it had become so popular it was described by some as a "social phenomenon."

The animation staff for *Sailor Moon* boasts creative talents such as Junichi Sato, Toei's veteran director supreme as series director, with Kunihiro Ikuhara, Hiromichi Matano and Takao Yoshizawa as episode directors and Masahiro Ando, Ikuko Ito and Hisashi Kagawa (among others) as animation directors. It's an impressive display of just how big the talent pool at Toei really is. The voice cast is also impressive. Without the monumental presence of Kotono Mitsuishi as Usagi Tsukino (Sailor Moon) the show wouldn't exist as we know it today. Aya Hisakawa, who plays the role of Ami (Sailor Mercury) has consistently placed in the top ranks of popularity polls, and Michie Tomizawa's uninhibited performance as Rei (Sailor Mars) contributes to the wonderfully campy feel of the show.

This grand convergence of cast, staff and fans into one television show demonstrates the potential of television animation to the fullest. There hasn't been a boom like this since *Macross*. The new season, *Sailor Moon R*, is continuing the legend by bringing *shojo* manga fans everywhere the kind of charm and excitement you just can't find in OAVs these days. For those doubters out there, give it a try. How will you know if you like *shojo* manga unless you give it a try?

All-Purpose Cultural Cat Girl

Sold Thru
King Record

Format
VHS/LD

Price
¥5800/¥5800

Length
30 minutes

Release Date
On Sale Now

Notes
Three-volume OAV series by the creator of *3x3 Eyes*

All-Purpose Cultural Cat Girl is the latest anime from artist/creator Yuzo Takada, perhaps best-known to American fans as the creator of the hit manga series *3 x 3 Eyes*. Originally a 44-page story serialized over three issues in Futabasha's *Weekly Manga Action*, the manga version of *All-Purpose Cultural Cat Girl* was put on indefinite hold in Japan when it was announced that the magazine would suspend publication. Fortunately for those of us with VCRs and laser disc players, the animated series which Takada himself helped to supervise is now available as an all-new OAV from Animate Film/Movic.

When scientific genius Kyusaku Natsuma transplants the brain of a cat brought home by his son Ryunosuke (played by Kazuhisa Ikura) into the chassis of the strongest android he's ever constructed, the two merge into pretty co-ed Nuku Nuku (Megumi Hayashibara, "female Ranma," *Ranma 1/2*; "Pai," *3 x 3 Eyes*) and hilarity and mayhem are only a "m-e-o-w" away.

The idea that androids and robots can experience human emotions has long been a feature of Japanese robot stories ever since the days of Osamu Tezuka's *Tetsuwan Atom* and is a strong indicator of the positive feelings the Japanese hold toward robots. In *All-Purpose Cultural Cat Girl*, the appeal lies in the personality of Nuku Nuku herself (of course, the planned scenes of bathing-suited frolic in Volume



Two don't hurt either).

All-Purpose Cultural Cat Girl is unusual in that it features marital squabbles of Ryunosuke's parents as a main theme, but basically the series is a heart-warming family comedy where no one is truly evil, only misunderstood. Pretty girls, mecha, school and family themes are all combined to create an enjoyable comedy guaranteed to appeal to fans of the genre.

Yuji Moriyama, known to anime fans for his work on *Urusei Yatsura*, *Project A-Ko* and *Wings of Oneami* is firmly in charge as character designer and animation director. Also worth mentioning is Hiroshi Matsuda, of the chart-topping rock group Southern All-Stars, who wrote all the music in *All-Purpose Cultural Cat Girl*. Production is by Animate Film/Movic, known for their production and sales of related animation merchandise or "goods," as they say in Japan, with music production by King Record.

Yet another act in the series' three-ring multimedia circus is the radio dramatization which aired on the Animate-sponsored programs "Hot-Blooded Radio Wave Club" and "Megumi's Tokyo Boogie Night" (presumably hosted by the ubiquitous actor herself) which have since become the talk of the Japanese anime industry. (Incidentally, the title "All-Purpose" comes from a popular adjective first given to household appliances over a generation ago, and serves to lend a "stylish" feel to the OAV.) *All-Purpose Cultural Cat Girl* is recommended for a purr-fectly good time.

This is Greenwood

Sold Thru
Victor Music
Industry

Format
VHS/LD

Price
¥5800/¥7800

Length
30 min.

Release Date
On Sale Now

Notes
Six-volume OAV series

This popular animated version of the girls' or *shojo* manga story originally serialized in Hakusensha's *Hana to Yume* ("Flowers and Dreams") focuses on the students of an all-boys school and their daily dormitory life. This theme really seems to resonate with girls of a certain age (specifically among girls coming of age), and many *shojo* manga classics have found their start here in this world of girls' imaginations populated by only the prettiest of pretty boys.

The unique slapstick humor of original series artist Yukie Nasu has made her popular among fans of the genre. This comedic touch plays especially well in *This is Greenwood*, as witnessed by the many CD audio dramas which have been in production since 1989, long before the series was animated. Blessed with a top-notch staff, *This is Greenwood* succeeds beautifully in recreating the wit and humor of the original series.

Stretching his artistic legs in the production is Tomomichi Mochizuki, who not only directs but performs script writing and storyboard duties as well. Mochizuki, who made his splashy debut as director of *Magical Angel Creamy Mami* at Studio Pierrot, is credited by many as establishing the "magical wand-wielding flower princess" genre with his memorable "Yu's Flashdance" and "My Wonderful Pianist" episodes of *Creamy Mami*.

In *This is Greenwood*, the first episode "Love Thy Daily Life" and the fourth episode "Mitsuru and the Ghost—Visions at the Greenwood Apartment" are especially wonderful in their elaborate composition. Masako Goto, pioneer of the trademark Pierrot animation style, serves as animation director and character designer. Art direction is by Shichiro Kobayashi, with rock group Southern All-Stars' Kazuyuki Sekiguchi credited as sound producer (the soundtrack is gorgeous).

The cast of *This is Greenwood* reads like a casting director's wish list, with Nozomi Sasaki as Kazuya Hasukawa

("Ushio," *Ushio and Tiger*); Mitsuo Iwata as Mitsuro Ikeda ("Kaneda," *Akira*); Toshihiko Seki as Shinobu Tezuka ("Tie," *The Weathering Continent*); Chinatsu Sakamoto as Shun Kisaragi ("Kentaro," *Maison Ikkoku*); Kazuhiko Inoue as Kazuhiro Hasukawa ("Eiji," *SPT Layzner*); and last but definitely not least, voice-acting superstar Sumi Shimamoto as Sumire Hasukawa ("Nausicaä," *Nausicaä of the Valley of Wind*; "Kyoko Otonashi," *Maison Ikkoku*; "Clarice," *Castle of Cagliostro*).

This is Greenwood is a work made expressly for those who mistakenly think all there is to Japanese animation is pretty girls, mecha and transforming robots. Highly recommended. ★

CD Review The Compact View

In Japan, animation soundtracks are every bit as legitimate as the latest from Ryuichi Sakamoto. Even the most humble of anime features are certain to be accompanied by an "official" soundtrack. Each issue in **The Compact View**, music enthusiast **Chris Keller** helps you to understand the often confusing world of CDs by reviewing both Japanese and domestic releases.



The Weathering Continent, Vol. 1

Released Thru
Victor

Order No.
VICL-302

Length
49:57 min.

Price
¥3000 (w/tax)

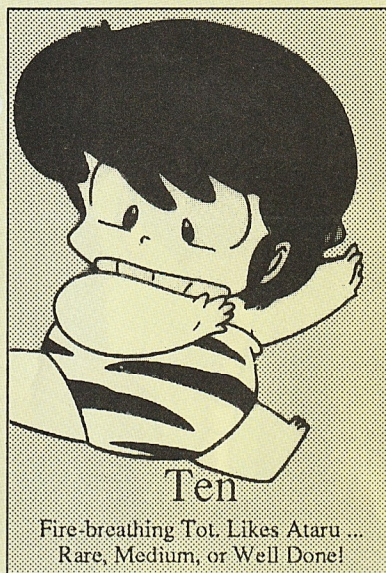
The recent popularity of the fantasy genre in anime has been a boon for classical musicians in Japan. "Weathering Continent," like similar scores for sword and sorcery anime, features a small classical orchestra talented enough to play the orchestral pieces as well as the more new age and folk selections.

Michiru Oshima's score features an eclectic range of styles. On the more classically oriented pieces the sound has a much more majestic feel than even the famed *Record of Lodoss War* soundtrack albums. Other tracks are a curious blend of new age and medieval folk styles, and the use of folk instruments such as mandolin, bouzouki and recorder brings to mind the Mediterranean sounds of Jo Hisaishi's score to *Arion*, another "must-buy" industry standby.

Also on the album are two pop vocals by Yui Nishiwaki ("Eternal Wind," *Gundam F-91*). Nishiwaki's voice is so smooth and comes forth with such effortless delivery she easily stands out among the best voices you'll hear on an anime soundtrack this year.

"Weathering Continent, Volume One" also features vocal solos on several of the tracks reminiscent of 1970s anime such as *Space Cruiser Yamato*. The music from this series is beautifully crafted and it's readily apparent that real care has been taken in both production and performance. A nice purchase if you're interested in something other than a rock instrumental record.

If it's Anime, it's gotta be AnimEigo!



The Urusei Yatsura craze just gets hotter and hotter, and AnimEigo is proud to add fuel to the fire with another two UY tapes in April.

First, our seventh UY TV tape includes 4 more installments of irresistible insanity! And then, in the fourth OVA tape, the going gets weird when a ghostly girl becomes attached to one of the gang in "Date with a Spirit," and then just becomes downright silly when little Ten gives everyone an alien kid's disease in "The Terror of Girly-eye's Measles!" \$39.95 ea.



Urusei Yatsura

When a highly charged Alien Princess falls for a luckless and lecherous lout, the stage is set for some very outrageous comedy!

\$39.95 ea.

TV tapes even mths
Movies & OVA's odd mths



Bubblegum Crisis

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2032 MegaTokyo --
Technology is exploding!

8 Episodes: \$34.95 ea.

Hurricane Live 2032 &
2033, Music Videos:
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LaserDiscs: (4 volumes, all
8 episodes plus music
videos) \$64.95 ea.



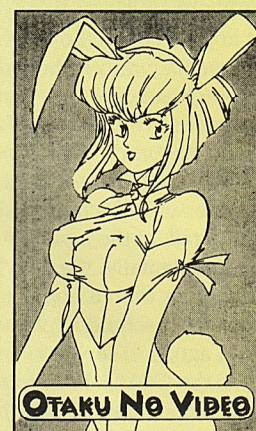
Kimagure Orange Road

Hikaru loves Kyosuke,
and makes sure every-
one knows it.

Madoka thinks she loves
Kyosuke, but nobody
knows it.

Kyosuke doesn't know
who he loves, but he's
praying nobody finds
out about the family
curse -- Psychic Powers!

5 Volumes: \$39.95 ea.



Otaku No Video

The demented denizens
of Gainax, Japan's
strangest Animation
studio, take a hilarious
look at Animation Fans
and Fandom in this
animated "Mocku-
mentary."

With more in-jokes per
minute than any film we
know of, it's a must for
any fan of any genre!

\$39.95.

S

SUBTITLED FOR THE
JAPANESE LANGUAGE
IMPAIRED.

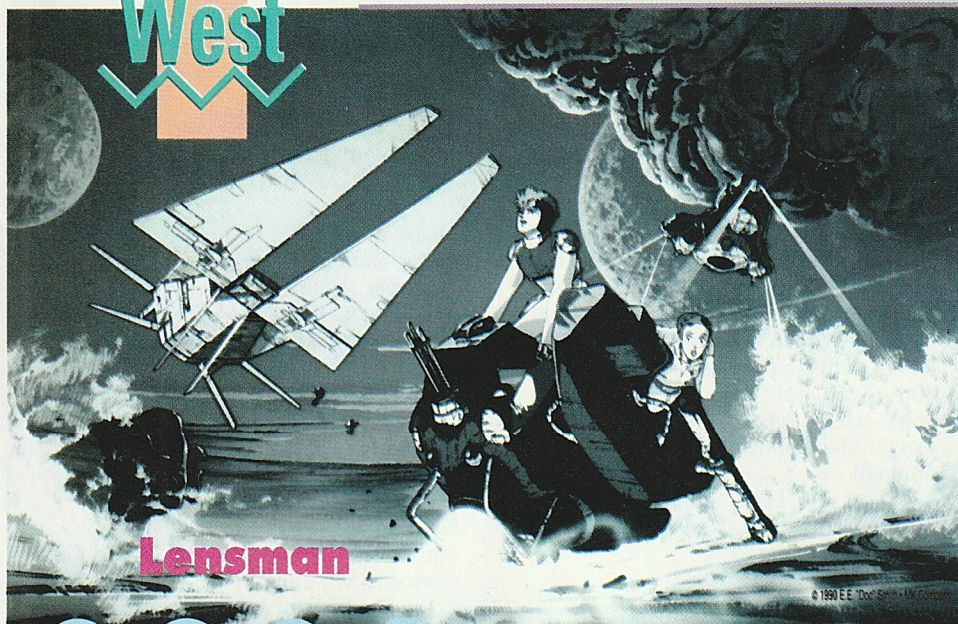
Your First Teacher's Warning: If I'd known you were going to watch subtitled Anime, I'd never have taught you to read in the first place!

"The Best Movies You'll Ever Read"

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AnimEigo

The American anime industry has come a long way since the early days of Astro Boy. Several U.S.-based companies are making it easier than ever for non-Japanese-speaking fans to keep up with their favorite shows. In this section, ANIMERICA takes a look at the best in English subs and dubs. By Rick Sternbach



Lensman

Sold Thru
Streamline
Pictures/
Lumivision

Format
Dubbed VHS; LD
features dual English/
Japanese tracks

Price
\$29.95/\$39.95

Length
107 minutes

Release Date
On Sale Now

Translation
English Dialogue
by Steve Kramer

Notes
NOT the Harmony
Gold version!

A long time ago, in a galaxy—well, long before either *Star Wars* or *Star Trek*, Edward E. “Doc” Smith thrilled readers in the 1930s with tales of zooming spaceships, nullifier rays, armor-piercing atomic torpedoes, and the timeless battle of good against evil, all set against the starry reaches of the galaxy. In the forefront of the struggle to rid the universe of the ruthless Eddorians was the Galactic Patrol, composed of the best scientific minds and purest hearts of many worlds. The Patrolmen destined for the most difficult missions and highest honors were the Lensmen. Each was endowed by the Mentors of Arisia, the hated enemies of Eddor, with the crystalline Lens, powerful enough to transmit thought across the light-years—and perhaps capable of much more.

The English-dubbed anime retelling of this classic SF saga comes to us from Streamline Pictures, under their VHS tape line of “Video Comics.” The original film made its American debut at the 1984 Boston World Science Fiction Convention, by way of a subtitled print provided by Kodansha. It was previously available in Japanese on a Pony Cannon laser disc, and as of this writing lives again on a Streamline LD distributed by Lumivision.

The drawing and motion quality are superb, notably in the special effects, and in the character renderings of the most famous Lensman, Kimball Kinnison; his

future life’s partner Clarissa MacDougal; the wonderfully brutish Van Buskirk; and the soaring, dragon-like Worsel, himself a Lensman. Worsel is nicely realized as a non-humanoid alien, as are the henchmen of the Eddorian agent Helmuth. While the studio has taken some liberties with the characters and situations, the resulting film remains an acceptable high-tech version of Smith’s scenario. By way of comparison, the literary Kinnison was an arrow-straight Academy graduate, the son of Rod “the Rock” Kinnison and recipient of his Lens straight out of school. His anime counterpart was raised, Luke Skywalker-style, on a farm by one Gary Kinnison, and received his Lens from a dying Patrolman. MacDougal, a strong-willed, red-headed Irish girl, is portrayed as a brunette with Princess Leia braids. No matter; it’s still high adventure, punctuated with a good dose of humor.

The animation is augmented by extensive computer graphics, apparently from various CGI labs, including the New York Institute of Technology, part of the same experimental era that brought us *Tron*. Though the normal cel and computer styles are radically different, the sequences of the starship *Britannia*, the Lens, and Kim’s battles with Helmuth are dynamic and stimulating. The traditional cel wins out, however, in an amazing chase through miles of machinery near the film’s end.

The ships and other mecha hardware are meticulously designed and animated with what I can only assume was a fanatical love of giant levers, weapons, explosives, and energy blasts. The music is an interesting mix of rock, pop vocals, and inventive instrumentals. The opening titles

are accompanied by a catchy rhythm and the sounds of crashing glass.

All that said, however, the total experience of the film is somewhat lost in Streamline’s VHS release. The most obvious casualty is the music, which is unsatisfyingly suppressed and somewhat muffled. The tape is not hi-fi, and pales against the great stereo separation and fullness of the original laser’s audio track. Streamline’s Carl Macek explained that the music and sound effects track that they received was mono and required reprocessing into a synthetic stereo. The dual-language Lumivision laser disc, on the other hand, is reportedly in full stereo on the Japanese track. Long-time collectors may find the English voice-acting in most—but not all—of the characters flat and uninteresting. An attempt at unique “alien” accents would have helped immensely. I much prefer the gruff and gritty textures of the Japanese villains in particular. Though a small thing, the great booming “Lens-man!” is sadly missing from the title. The tape’s end credits, even with video enhancement turned on, are almost entirely unreadable, so it will take some research to uncover the talent responsible. On the up side, the tape image quality is passable and one gets a good understanding of the story from the dialogue (I can’t comment on the translation, but I didn’t hear anything that felt terribly out of place).

Perhaps we should consider ourselves lucky...this is the second English version. The previous tape, produced by Harmony gold but not released in the U.S., was cut by 30 minutes and had all of its audio tracks replaced. The Streamline version has restored the original music, songs and sound effects.

One way or another, see this version for the story. The original is still an excellent example of the devotion to the anime craft, coming as it did in 1984, a time many of us consider the beginning of the big anime wave. ★



Rick Sternbach is best known for his work as senior illustrator/technical consultant on *Star Trek: The Next Generation* as well as the STTNG spin-off *Deep Space Nine*. He has twice been honored with science fiction’s prestigious Hugo Award for Best Artist, and won an Emmy as an assistant art director on the PBS series *Cosmos*. His list of favorite anime goes at least as long as his art credits, and when he’s not wheedling STTNG’s writers into including anime in-jokes in the scripts, he studies Japanese with his young son Josh through his abundant anime laser disc collection.

Letters from Our Readers

Animessages

(during con season)



The anime and manga convention season is upon us at last! Both Viz Comics and the many members of the ANIMERICA staff will be at both Anime America on June 25-27 and Anime Expo on July 2-4 to meet with our readers (this means you!).

Don't hesitate to come up to any of us and say hello. I'll be the one with the Macintosh PowerBook 165c in one hand and a drink in the other; Art Director Yoshi Higuchi the slender man with the kind eyes; our Associate Editors Julie Davis the tall red-head with a camera, Takayuki Karahashi the calm, centered spiritual type sporting the goatee, and Toshifumi Yoshida the tall, good-natured linebacker with the Reebok Pumps; Managing Editor Satoru Fujii the man drinking cans of Prince Jamaican Gold Iced Coffee; Executive Editor Seiji Horibuchi the one looking like he'd rather be golfing; and of course, velvety-voiced Office Manager Lopa with her ubiquitous black blazer and ready smile.

We'll see you there!

Dear Animessages,

Just finished plowing through your March '93 issue, and I thought I'd take up your invitation to send some quick responses your way:

1. Your news section is easily ANIMERICA's best feature; it is very up-to-date on the latest developments in Japan. I also find the columns by both Takashi Oshiguchi and James Hudnall extremely informative, thoughtful and well-written.
2. Please consider expanding your letters page. I could do without the extra manga reprints just so I could hear more of what's going on in the anime world from the perspective of genuine fans.
3. Your CD review section is minuscule! Once a month is too long a wait for one tiny capsule review lodged on the bottom right of the page. Take a leaf from ANIMENOMINOUS, which had two- to three-page reviews with nice reproductions of the CD cover art.
4. The *Gundam* overview was interesting but hardly new; the same territory

was covered in massive detail in the latest issue (Vol. 1/No. 5) of ANIMAG U.K., including an almost identical sidebar on the Char Aznable and Zeon/Gion controversy, with more to follow next issue. Get off the trend-wagon while you still can!

Also, I beg to differ with reader Wayne Garlock's cry for dubbed rather than subtitled videos; I happen to prefer subtitled anime because I like to hear the original language, which at its best can become a wonderfully orchestrated vocal concert. Sorry, Trish, but "more money for anime voice-actors" is hardly a good enough reason for obliterating the soundtrack of the original!

That said, I very much enjoyed your first two issues and am looking forward to the third installment.

Best,

Patrick Perry
West Hollywood, CA

Ah, the old "subbing vs. dubbing" debate. I think it's safe to say that all anime fans prefer subbing to dubbing (I know I do). What we've got to realize, though, is that anime is no longer a something that appeals to only a small percentage of the population but something much bigger, and the videos being dubbed these days are made with that in mind. By releasing both subtitled and dubbed versions, I think U.S. Manga Corps has the best idea of all. ("ANIMAG U.K."? What ANIMAG U.K.? Could you have meant ANIME U.K., perchance?)

Dear Trish,

Many thanks and many, many congratulations on Issue No. 1 of ANIMERICA, which just reached me today. I even managed to read it before it was grabbed by Wil Overton, and I don't expect to see it again (or get any work out of Wil!) for the next couple of hours.

Of course it's nice to see the manga strips—but that's not, in my view, the most important component of ANIMERICA. You've improved on your sterling work in Issue No. 0 in many areas, not least the design and use of colour in the magazine, and I'm looking forward to seeing what you do with more spot colour next issue. Your writers have their own voices and the editorial content of the magazine reads like a conversation with friends.

Here in Britain anime fandom is still in its infancy, the commercial market is still very small and there's a huge hunger for information and discussion on every aspect of anime. I can assure you that ANIMERICA is going to be as welcome on this side of the Atlantic as it is over there

in its homeland.

Good luck for the future.

Yours sincerely,

Helen McCarthy
Editor, ANIME U.K. MAGAZINE

Thank you, Helen, for the kind words. The anime and manga industry outside of Japan is not yet so big that we can't afford to lend a helping hand to each other for the sake of promoting that which we all love. Since my early days at ANIMAG, I've always thought of this "inter-industry goodwill," if you will, as more important than any one magazine or video company. And so, it would seem, do you.

Dear Trish,

I'm sixteen years old and I'm writing in reference to two things. First, Trish, you asked in the first issue of ANIMERICA if you were a good voice-actor. My answer is "yes" (it's cool having a voice-actor as an editor!).

Second, I have two questions. First, how can I become a voice-actor? Second, I'm a writer for a new comic book company coming out called "Delirium" comics. My question is, how can I (in my spare time) be a writer for ANIMERICA along with Altstaetter, Hudnall, Ishigami, Keller, Lee, Oshiguchi and Sternbach?

Your friend and fan,

James L. Jenkins
Waldorf, MD

How to become an anime voice-actor...hmm. One of two ways, really. Either move to Los Angeles and go out on auditions, or fly down to L.A. and go out on auditions (that's what I do). Good luck! On writing for ANIMERICA, unfortunately we're not accepting any unsolicited contributions at this time. Thanks for your interest.

Dear Trish Ledoux,

Ogenki desu ka? My name is Chris Riley and I'm seventeen years old and a very big fan of Japanese anime. I am very grateful to all the companies bringing Japanese anime to America. I just wish that they would just stay to subtitling and forget the dubbed tapes. It's not that I don't like the dubbed tapes—I just prefer watching the cartoon with the original voice-actors.

I have a couple of questions for you:

1. I missed the premiere issue of ANIMERICA. Is it possible for me to order one from you?
2. Will you expand the length of your "AV Interface" column?

3. I noticed that you helped translate *Gunbuster*. I don't know if you worked on the first episode, but I wanted to know why it is every time Noriko calls Amano "oneesama" it comes out "Kazumi" and not "older sister."
4. Will you ever add a fan art section?
5. How does someone become a voice-actor?
6. Why is it every time someone calls Hibiki's name (in L.A. Hero/U.S. Renditions' version) it sounds like "Habiki"?
7. Did you really do the voice for Wendy Ryder? After seeing your picture I find it hard to believe that that's your voice.
8. Can we order posters from you?
9. Will ANIMERICA ever go to full color? (I hope so. You have too

much good work to be seen in black and white. I know it's expensive, but we're worth it.)

Your staff deserves a big pat on the back. I hope ANIMERICA turns out like B-CLUB, NEWTYPE, ANIME V or ANIMEDIA. I don't care what anyone says—I think your voice sounds great. Keep up the good work. Maybe you can help those who worked on *Robotech* with their voices.

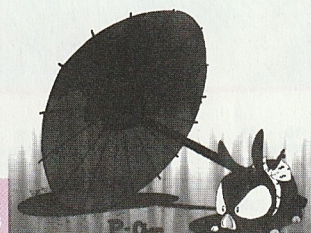
Sincerely,

Chris Riley
Tacoma, WA

(1) Yes. (2) Probably not. (3) That was an editorial decision and not, I don't think, a bad one. Translations don't have to be literal to be faithful, you know. (4) Not anytime soon. (5) See above. (6) Sadly, few American voice-actors have made it a habit to study Japanese pronunciation. (7) Yes, I really did the voice. Thank you...(I think). (8) Yes, by all means! (9) Yes, if we can build up enough subscribers (hint, hint).

We've come to the end of our fourth letter-col (has it been four months already?) and you guys are finally starting to make yourselves heard. Keep sending in those cards and letters, via regular mail or e-mail to viz@netcom.com (if you do write via e-mail, you must include a name, address and telephone number with your correspondence or we won't be able to publish it). As always, if you'd like your full address printed, let us know. See you in thirty!
—Trish

ANIMERICA welcomes letters from its readers. Address correspondence to: **Letters to the Editor, c/o Viz Comics, P.O. Box 77010, San Francisco, CA 94107** or via electronic mail at viz@netcom.com. We are unable to answer letters individually. Concise, typed letters have the best chance of being published. We reserve the right to edit for space or clarity.



Sent in by Kevin Poythress

The Animessages Poll

Our thanks to everyone who responded to the questionnaire in our March issue. Among other questions, we asked you to list your favorite anime shows, characters and manga. Here's what you told us:

Your Favorite Anime Show

Bubblegum Crisis (Available in English from AnimEigo)



Your Favorite Anime Character

Priss (*Bubblegum Crisis*)



Your Favorite Manga (Three-Way Tie)

Macross II • *Ranma 1/2* • *Urusei Yatsura* (Viz Comics)



You know what they say...practice makes perfect. And we want ANIMERICA to be as perfect as we—and you, our readers—can make it. Please take a moment to answer this

month's questionnaire, letting us know which features, columns and departments you liked (or didn't like).

In the meantime, keep sending in your top three (not five) favorite anime shows, characters and manga. We'll print the results in an upcoming issue. Send your completed questionnaires and your "anime/manga favorites" polls by **July 31, 1993** to:

ANIMERICA Readers' Poll
c/o Viz Comics
P.O. Box 77010
San Francisco, California 94107

A random drawing will award five lucky readers with a sampling of Viz Comics. Remember—if it's Anime in America, it's Gotta be ANIMERICA!™ We look forward to hearing from you soon.

On a
Scale
1-10

ANIMERICA June '93

Feature Article: Silent Möbius

The ANIMERICA Interview: "The Twists and Turns of Kia Asamiya"

"The Girls of Silent Möbius," A Full-Color Pictorial You'll Want to Tell Your Friends About!

"Asamiya or Kikuchi? How to Tell the Difference"

Manga Feature: *AD Police* by Tony Takezaki

Manga Feature: *Mermaid Forest* by Rumiko Takahashi

Dateline: Japan

Dateline: America

Manga Close-Up

Extreme Close-Up

Best of the West

Best of the East

The Compact View

From the Editor

Between the Covers

TV Top Ten, Japan

From the Forest

Coming Soon in Japan

Video Clips: Japan

Anime Q & A

Video Clips: America

Coming Soon in America

Manga Top Ten

Fresh From the Forest

AV Interface

Animessages

In Our Next Issue...!

NAME: _____ AGE: _____ SEX: _____ M _____ F _____

ADDRESS: _____

CITY: _____ STATE: _____ ZIP: _____

My three favorite anime titles:

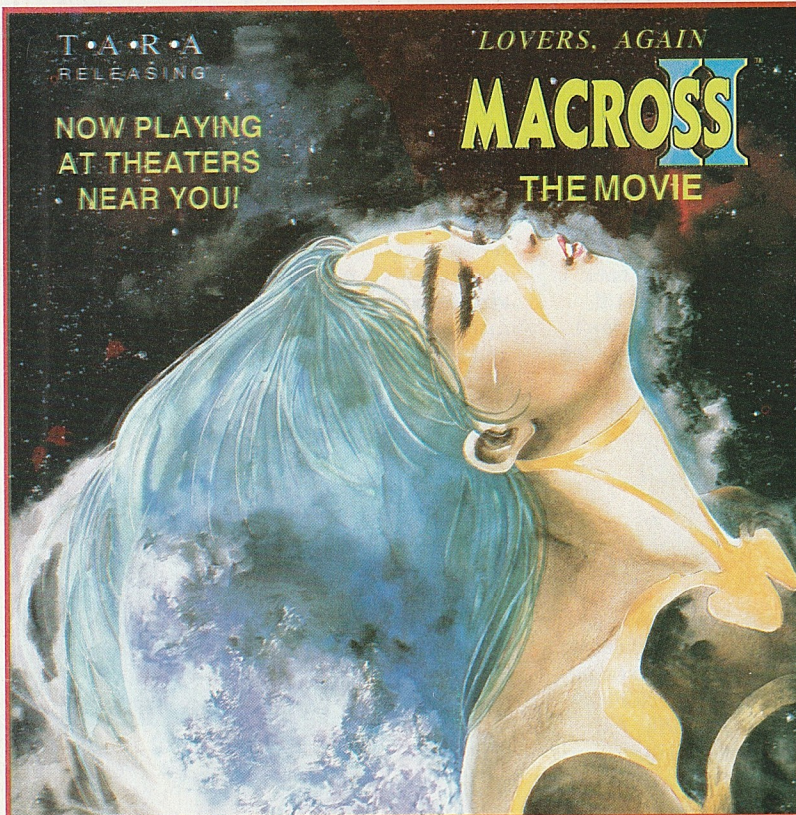
-
-
-

My three favorite anime characters

-
-
-

My three favorite manga titles:

-
-
-



MACROSS II THEATRICAL RELEASE DATES AND LOCATIONS

JUNE 10 - 11
Ken Theater
4061 Adams Ave.
San Diego, CA 92116

JULY 2 - 8
Vogue Theatre
3727 Lexington Rd.
Louisville, KY 40207

JULY 15 - 19
Kentucky Theatre
214 East Main St.
Lexington, KY 40507

June 4 - 10
Laemmle's SUNSET 5
8000 Sunset Blvd.
Los Angeles, CA 90026

JUNE 25 - 26 & JULY 2 - 3
Tower Theatre
2508 Landpark Drive
Sacramento, CA 95818

AUGUST 13 - 19
Music Box
3733 North Southport Ave
Chicago, IL 60613

MAY 30 - JUNE 2
Capitol Theatre
206 East 5th Ave.
Olympia, WA 98501

JULY 9 - ?
Dobie
2021 Guadalupe
Austin, TX 78705

JULY 23 - 26
Cinefest
66 Courtland Ave.
Atlanta, GA 30303

JUNE 7 - 8
Neptune Theatre
911 N.E. 50th
Seattle, WA 98105

JULY 23 - 29
The Knickerbocker
86 East 8th Street
Holland, MI 49423

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In the Next Issue of ANIMERICA...!

With *TOTORO* in theaters everywhere and the upcoming news piece on *RANMA 1/2* on the nationally syndicated *ENTERTAINMENT TONIGHT*, anime and manga have never enjoyed more mainstream success. Join the wave that's sweeping across the country with *ANIMERICA*, America's first (and only!) anime and manga monthly. Be sure not to miss a single one of these exciting features (in COLOR).

Anime Feature

Hayao Miyazaki

NAUSICAA OF THE VALLEY OF WIND...LAPUTA, CASTLE IN THE SKY...MY NEIGHBOR TOTORO...KIKI'S DELIVERY SERVICE...THE CRIMSON PIG...

Is it any wonder many people consider Hayao Miyazaki **the best animation creator** in the world today? Special correspondent **Takashi Oshiguchi** speaks with the internationally renowned filmmaker in the **ever-exclusive ANIMERICA Interview**; Associate Editor **Takayuki Karahashi** profiles **Miyazaki's early career**; NAUSICAA translator and manga scholar **Matt Thorn** reveals **what it's like to work on a manga masterpiece**; a handy guide to **Miyazaki's animated classics**; plus the debut of the **original manga** which inspired the blockbuster **CRIMSON PIG** theatrical release, **"The Age of Flying Boats."** Possibly our best issue yet!

Manga Features

The Fifth Chilling Installment in the Horror Masterpiece

MERMAID FOREST

Partake of the mermaid's flesh, the legend says, and you'll live forever. But what happens when you don't want to be immortal anymore? **MERMAID FOREST** is a uniquely macabre tale from manga wunderkind Rumiko Takahashi and is exclusive to *ANIMERICA*

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AD Police

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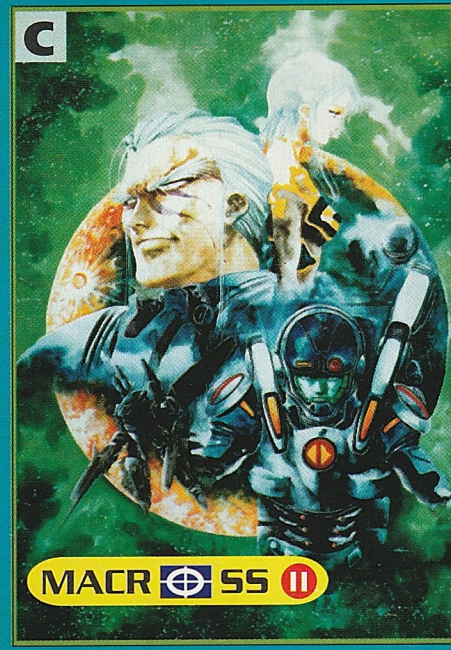
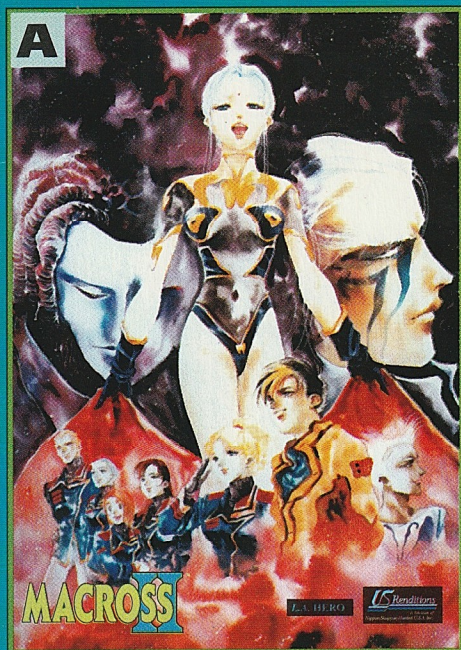
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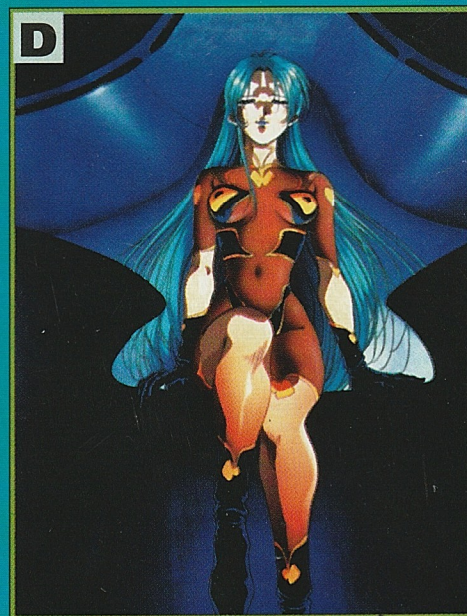
The poster from the most popular episode in the series. Beautifully illustrated by Macross legend Haruhiko Mikimoto; this image is reproduced on high quality 80 pound linen bond which is heavier than average poster paper. Features Hibiki, Silvie, Ishtar and Elensh against space background.

C. Theatrical One-sheet \$10.00 27 x 41 1/8 full color

This is the rare movie one-sheet for L.A. Hero / Tara Releasing's full length theatrical version of Macross II. It contains movie version logo and is beautifully illustrated by Haruhiko Mikimoto. Features Hibiki (in flight suit), Marduk Lord Feff, and Ishtar.

D. Ishtar (Viz Comics) \$10.00 28 5/8 x 40 1/2 full color

The key image from the series is printed as an oversize poster from Viz Comics. Cel style image by Haruhiko Mikimoto features Ishtar in the Alus Nova.



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